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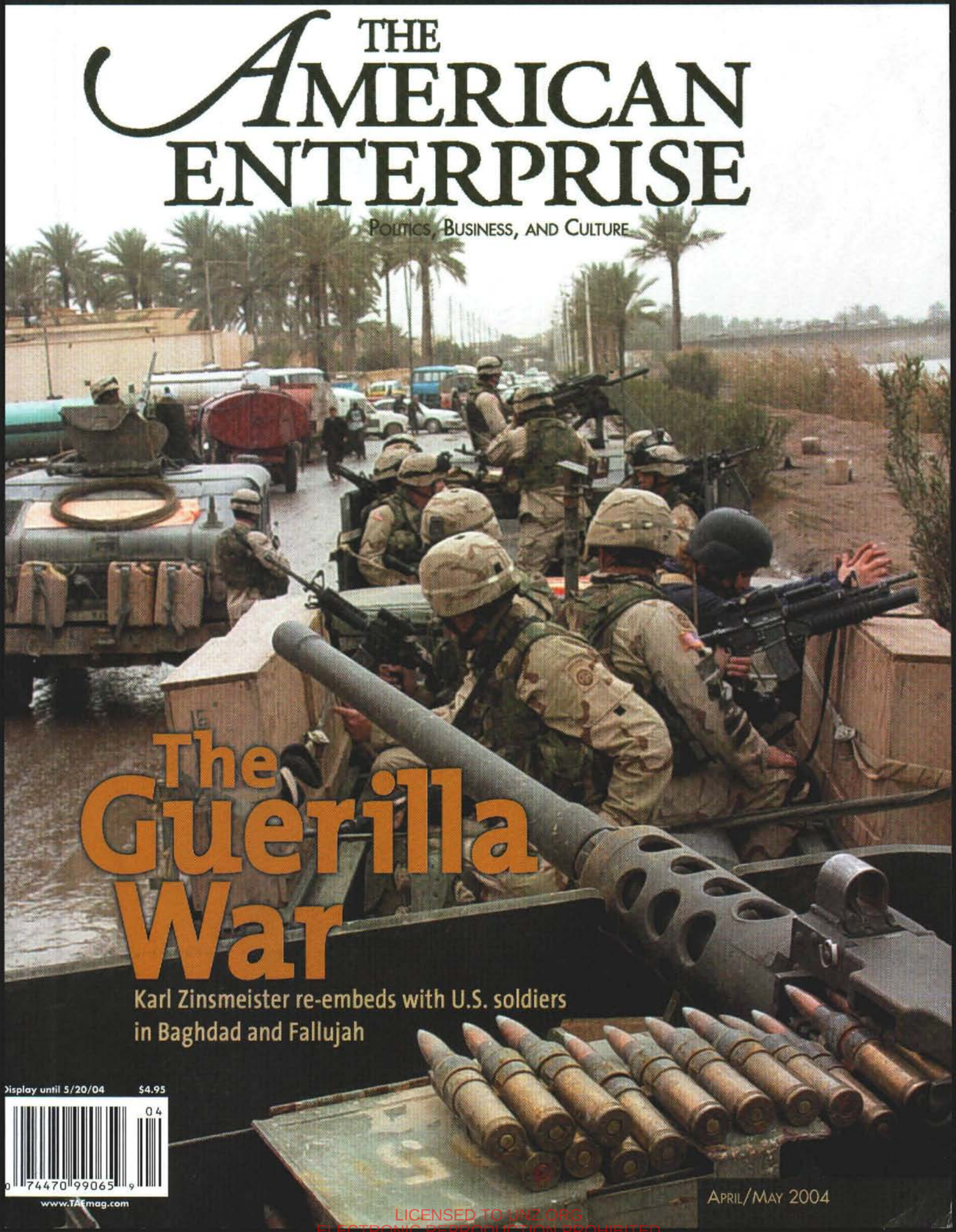

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Think TANK

With BEN WATTENBERG

"This is the first opportunity I had to view your show. Excellent format with thought-provoking and probing questions. My compliments to the interviewer, Ben Wattenberg.

On the Iraq war, which Kissinger supported, he justified it on your show by saying there were links between Saddam and Al Qaeda. There is no evidence for this; why did you not challenge him?

It's difficult to express to you how impressive this interview [with Henry Kissinger] was. It was fairly unbiased, non-combative, and the interviewer allowed Dr. Kissinger to speak for more than a sound bite or two.

Your Orwell program was one of your very best. Great ideas from open-minded, very competent participants. Packed from beginning to end but still complete. Congratulations.

Congratulations to you on getting an audience with such an important historical figure!

This show is one of the best things going on TV.

I would not miss [**Think Tank**] for the world.

I had never heard of your show but was casually surfing this morning when I caught the last segment of the interview with Kissinger. Congratulations. You have a new fan.

First of all let me tell you how much I enjoy your excellent show. Your choice of subject matter is always unique and of keen interest, and you and your guests are very engaging.

I just watched Ben Wattenberg's interview with Mr. Brzezinski and was impressed enough that I plan to send transcripts to several friends. How refreshing to hear intelligent critique of the Bush/Cheney/Rumsfeld foreign policy and the Ashcroft domestic policy, instead of the routine anti-Bush rant. Thank you for providing enlightenment in dark times."

Our only response is "thank you"!

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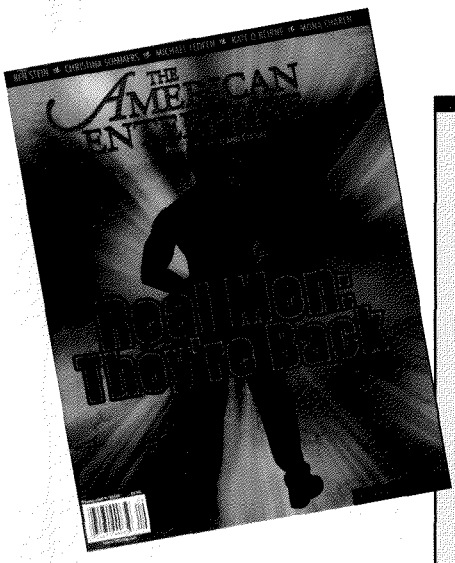

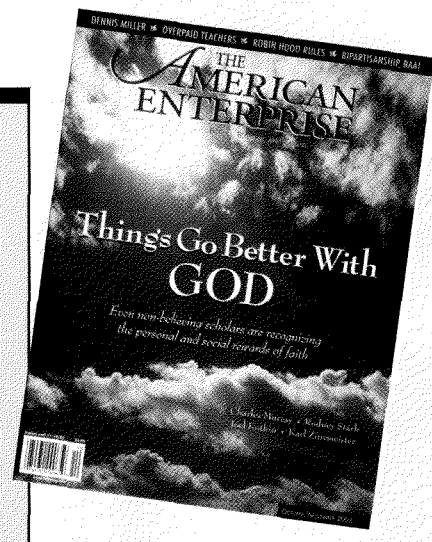

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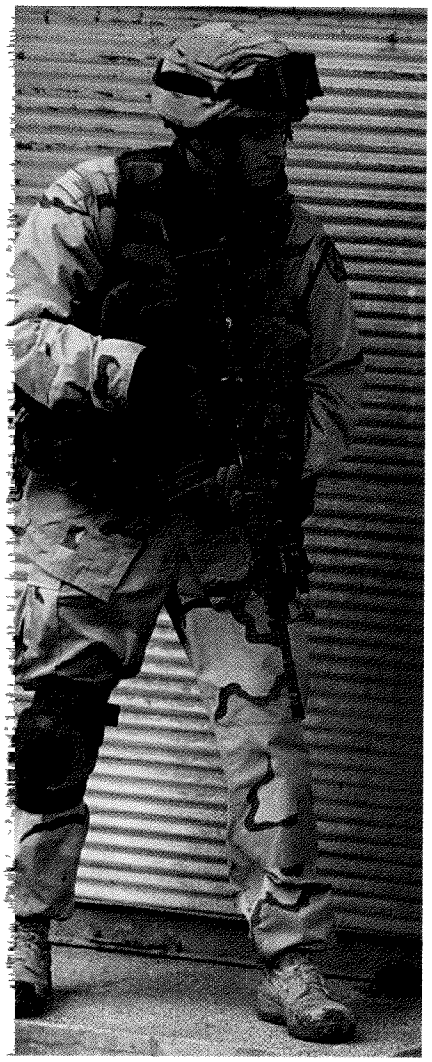

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Editor in Chief Karl Zinsmeister
Senior Editors Daniel Kennelly
Karina Rollins
Associate Editors Brandon Bosworth
Bill Kauffman
Eli Lehrer
Opinion Pulse Editor Karlyn Bowman
Art Director Jo Roback-Pal
Graphic Designers Jeanne Berger
Susan Levine
Proofreaders David Brandt
Adam Sommers
Interns Rachel Jurado
Amy Thoma
Marketing Director Ann Zinsmeister
Business Manager Garth Cadiz
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Contributing Writers James Glassman, Blake Hurst, Joel Kotkin, Philip Langdon, Daniel Lapin, Josh Larsen, Catesby Leigh, Michael Medved, Deroy Murdock, Grover Norquist, Ralph Reiland, Naomi Schaefer, Frederick Turner, Scott Walter, Chris Weinkopf

Web Site
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Letters to the Editor
"The Mail," The American Enterprise,
1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036,
or fax (202) 862-5867, or e-mail TAE@aei.org

Main Editorial and Production Office
The American Enterprise
1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 862-5886, or e-mail TAE@aei.org

Office of the Editor in Chief
The American Enterprise
23 Hurd Street, Cazenovia, N.Y. 13035
(315) 655-1033

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Bird's Eye

The Cold Realities of Our Fight in Iraq

By Karl Zinsmeister

At the one-year anniversary of the war that removed Saddam Hussein and set Iraq and the rest of the Middle East on a dramatically new path, about 400 American men and women have been killed in action. Each of those lost sons or husbands or daughters is a source of heartache for their families, and for all Americans. They're also a reminder that, as the saying goes, "Freedom's not free."

Right back here in our own land, about 300 defenders of public safety (cops, firefighters, prison guards) sacrifice their lives every year in the process of protecting the domestic tranquility of our streets, homes, and gathering places. That's 3,000 traumas per decade, a bill paid less visibly than war deaths, but just as inexorably. Both sorts of losses are part of the blood price of keeping our civilization secure.

Those dead defenders are the reason all decent Americans stand, snatch off their hats, and place their hands on their hearts when old soldiers or officers of the peace walk down our streets at Memorial Day parades or July 4th celebrations. We honor those who bear physical risks for the rest of the country precisely because we know these are not theoretical dangers, but real perils that claim a considerable number of our bravest citizens each season.

The Americans who have given their lives in battle in Iraq aren't random victims. They were doing their duty in one of the great turning points of our generation.

I reached voting age about the time of the Iranian hostage crisis in 1979. What an excruciating episode that was: 52 Americans held against their will, publicly taunted and humiliated day after day, our government paralyzed. And that was just the opening salvo for a generation of Middle Eastern extremism. There was the Beirut barracks bombing that killed 243 Americans. Then the Berlin discotheque blast. The slaughter of 270 innocent people on the terrorist-downed Pan Am Flight 103, followed by hundreds more on other sabotaged airplanes. In 1990 came Iraq's rape of Kuwait, and the high costs in blood and treasure of reversing that dangerous thrust. Next was the first attempt to bring down the World Trade Center, in 1993, to which the U.S. made no effective response at all. Two months later the Iraqi plot to assassinate President Bush was uncovered. Then came the Khobar Towers attack in Saudi Arabia, murdering American servicemen as they slept. Al-Qaeda killed 18 G.I.s in Mogadishu, then hundreds in the suicide bombings of U.S. embassies in Africa. The near-sinking of the *USS Cole* claimed 17 sailors and tens of millions of dollars. And, finally, the singeing, infuriating horror of September 11—with all the psychic, economic, and social trauma that followed.

Looking back, it's clear that we Americans were slow on the uptake, that we failed over and over to recognize that this was not a part of the world we could just ignore in the hope it would leave us alone. Only after repeated woundings, followed by one of the ugliest maulings Americans have suffered in their entire three-century history, did we realize that this is a chaotic, hate-filled, and violent region which urgently needs to be brought to order by more responsible forces.

Allowing the various zealots who populate the Middle East to continue their

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maraudings against the rest of the world could, within a period of just a few years, lead to the sort of unimaginable holocaust that suicidal fanaticism and modern weapons are now able to produce in combination. International inspectors were taken aback in early 2004 by how far along the Libyan and Iranian nuclear programs were. At the same time we learned that the father of Pakistan's "Muslim Bomb" has been selling nuclear secrets even to psychopaths like North Korea's Kim Jong Il. What other surprises await?

A de-fanging of the Middle East would be an historical event of enormous consequence. And while transforming the Arab world is undeniably a difficult venture, it's no more unlikely than other conversions we've witnessed recently. In the early 1970s, there was a grand total of 40 democratic societies across the globe. Democracy, it was said, simply wouldn't grow in certain kinds of soil. Then stony lands like Portugal, Spain, Greece, Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, nearly all of Latin America, all of Eastern Europe, and South Africa began to hold free elections for the first time ever. Many of these dramatic turnovers took place in a blink. Today, just 30 years later, there are 120 democracies, and the fraction of the world's population able to elect its own rulers has increased from one third to two thirds. There is nothing absurd about the idea that the Arab lands should be next in that line; in fact, there are many good reasons to press energetically in that direction.

The unprecedented security, freedom, wealth, and opportunity that Americans now enjoy didn't just burst forth out of a cabbage patch. These achievements were created, and then defended many times, by bloody force of arms. If contemporary Americans aren't sturdy enough to bear the sacrifices and sadness occasionally required in defense of our rare way of life, then we don't deserve our inheritance. That is the cold, undodgeable reality we face today in the Middle East.

The military men and women with whom I shared my late-January flight back to the U.S. from Iraq were mostly headed home on emergency leave. A major lost a grandfather. A sergeant based in Germany was going to collect his family, then fly to Arizona for a relative's funeral. A private quietly explained that his wife, six months pregnant, hadn't felt their baby move for some time, went to a doctor, and learned they had lost their first child. "I'm still in shock. We struggled so hard to conceive."

Not only in war, but also in the safety of our homes, life can often be hard. It is always fleeting. Its meaning comes, ultimately, from the ends toward which the life is dedicated.

There are times when the best response, perhaps the only response, to the hard blows of existence is to embrace each lump as a badge honoring the determined striving that produced it. In 1918, Teddy Roosevelt's son Quentin (who had left Harvard during his sophomore year to serve in World War I) was shot out of the sky in one of aerial warfare's early dogfights. German propagandists took photos of his maimed body amidst the plane wreckage and, hoping to dampen American morale, sent one to Mrs. Roosevelt. Rather than letting herself be cowed, however, she insisted that the picture be displayed over a mantel, as an emblem of her family's sturdiness and their pride in sacrifice for a high cause.

What Edith Roosevelt did was both a very hard and a very soft thing. She pushed aside her own grief and expressed admiration and undying love for her son by celebrating his bravery, and refusing to abandon his fight.

As they aggressively attack ancient evil and gently nurture frail shoots of a new good, our military bear many risks in Iraq. They face enemies who aim to kill them, and to panic the American public standing behind them. Our battle against Middle Eastern extremism can thus be thought of as a struggle of wills.

But demoralization can work both ways, and today it is Iraq's insurgents who are facing physical and psychological defeat. In January, U.S. forces seized a letter written by al-Qaeda's mastermind in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, as it was being carried to top al-Qaeda leaders in Afghanistan. The 17-page document despairs that despite their deadly car bombs and the sporadic killing of U.S. troops, the fighters have been unable to push the Americans from Iraq, or to spark mass discord among Iraqis. The letter reports that the insurgents are having trouble convincing Iraqis to join their resistance, and mourns that American forces are "growing stronger day after day."

Al-Qaeda itself is now in shambles. Two thirds of its leaders have been killed or captured, finances have collapsed, communication has been strangled, recruiting is difficult. Iraq's Baath Party has likewise been eviscerated. And other bullies in the region have turned skittish and newly cooperative. While the U.S. will need to grapple against terror for years to come, it is finally on offense, not defense. Having brought the battle to the plotters in their own strongholds, things have turned thankfully quiet at home. And across the Middle East, the most desperate effort of a range of terrorists is now to avoid U.S. forces.

"We are at a breaking point today," Colonel Kurt Fuller of the 82nd Airborne told me in Baghdad, leaning forward for emphasis. "This insurgency is running out of steam. We see many signs that Iraqis want the violence to be over. They want to get on with their lives. They can see we are not quitting, and they are increasingly willing to come forward and help us stand up to the worst elements in their society."

As the reporting in the center of this issue demonstrates, this progress has been won by thousands of U.S. soldiers doing their duty in Iraq. If Americans back at home will exhibit the tough love of the steely Mrs. Roosevelt—celebrating the accomplishments of our sons and daughters by cherishing their sacrifices on our mantels, and multiplying and extending their courage by refusing to abandon the struggle they are waging—then this is a fight America will certainly win.

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Sidelights

By Brandon Bosworth

Instead of using "Jr.", **Jon Blake Cusack** of Holland, Michigan opted to give the name **Jon Blake Cusack 2.0** to his son. ❧ "I consider the act absolutely brutal, threatening human rights, violating human dignity, xenophobic, and worthy of the worst horrors committed by the Nazis." Brazilian judge **Julier Sebastiao da Silva** describing the American plan to photograph and fingerprint various nationals, including Brazilians, who enter the U.S. ❧ Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, surveyed residents of nine European countries—Austria, Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, and Spain—to determine their attitudes toward Jews. 35 percent felt that Jews "should stop playing the victim because of the Holocaust and persecution of 50 years ago," and 16 percent believed the world would be better off if Israel did not exist. ··· An Israeli government study found that 47 percent of all anti-Semitic incidents in Western Europe occur in France, where they nearly doubled last year, from 77 to 141.

Chemical giant Degussa was contracted to apply an anti-graffiti sealant to the future Holocaust Memorial in Berlin. It was discovered that one of its former subsidiaries, Degsch, supplied some of the Zyklon-B cyanide tablets used in Nazi gas chambers during the Third Reich. A new company is being sought to apply the sealant. ❧ A European Commission report cast doubt on the E.U.'s goal of becoming "the most competitive, knowledge-based economy in the World by 2010." According to the report, "the Union cannot catch up on the United States as our per capita GDP is 72 percent of our American partner's." ❧ Saudi Arabia has banned the importation of female dolls and teddy bears. ❧ At a Spokane, Washington rally, **Howard Dean** encouraged America to switch to the metric system. "I'm a doctor. I was trained and we do our calculations in meters. We don't use feet and inches and cubic inches and things like that." ❧ If they were allowed to participate in American elections, only 15 percent of Canadians would vote for **George W. Bush**, reveals a *Maclean*'s poll. ❧ The Bill Clinton Presidential Library revealed that **Clinton** only sent two e-mails during his eight years as President. One was a test message to see if he knew how to send e-mail. ··· Four out of five American teens have no desire to grow up to be President, according to an ABC News/*Weekly Reader* poll.

"I'd ask you in, but my decor is *moderne* and you would look completely wrong."

The Census Bureau reported that the U.S. population increases by one person every 12 seconds. ❧ Subway workers in Mexico City are giving away free books in an effort to fight crime. Says **Javier Gonzalez Garza**, the director of the subway system, "When people read, people change." ❧ Tokyo residents turned in about $23 million in cash found on the street, in the subway, and other public places in 2002. ❧ Ireland proposed an E.U.-wide ban on paying for sex. Currently, Sweden is the only E.U. member state where the practice is illegal. ❧ **Mick Henry**, a 59-year-old English retiree, was named a tribal chief with rights to thousands of acres of Indian land in Manitoba. The son of a British woman and a Canadian Ojibway Indian, Henry says members of the Golden Eagle clan are trying to come up with a "proper ceremonial name" for him. "At the moment, they just call me the Blue-Eyed Red Indian." ❧ **Steven Gough** successfully hiked the length of Great Britain in the nude. The 847-mile journey lasted seven months. He undertook the trek in an effort to change attitudes regarding public nudity.

Inmates at an Oklahoma jail went on a hunger strike to protest a new, healthier prison menu. The revamped menu substitutes turkey for beef in many dishes, and prisoners said they would rather starve than eat turkey loaf. ··· Westchester, New York retirement-home resident Esther Danes had her first-ever meal at McDonald's at the age of 99.

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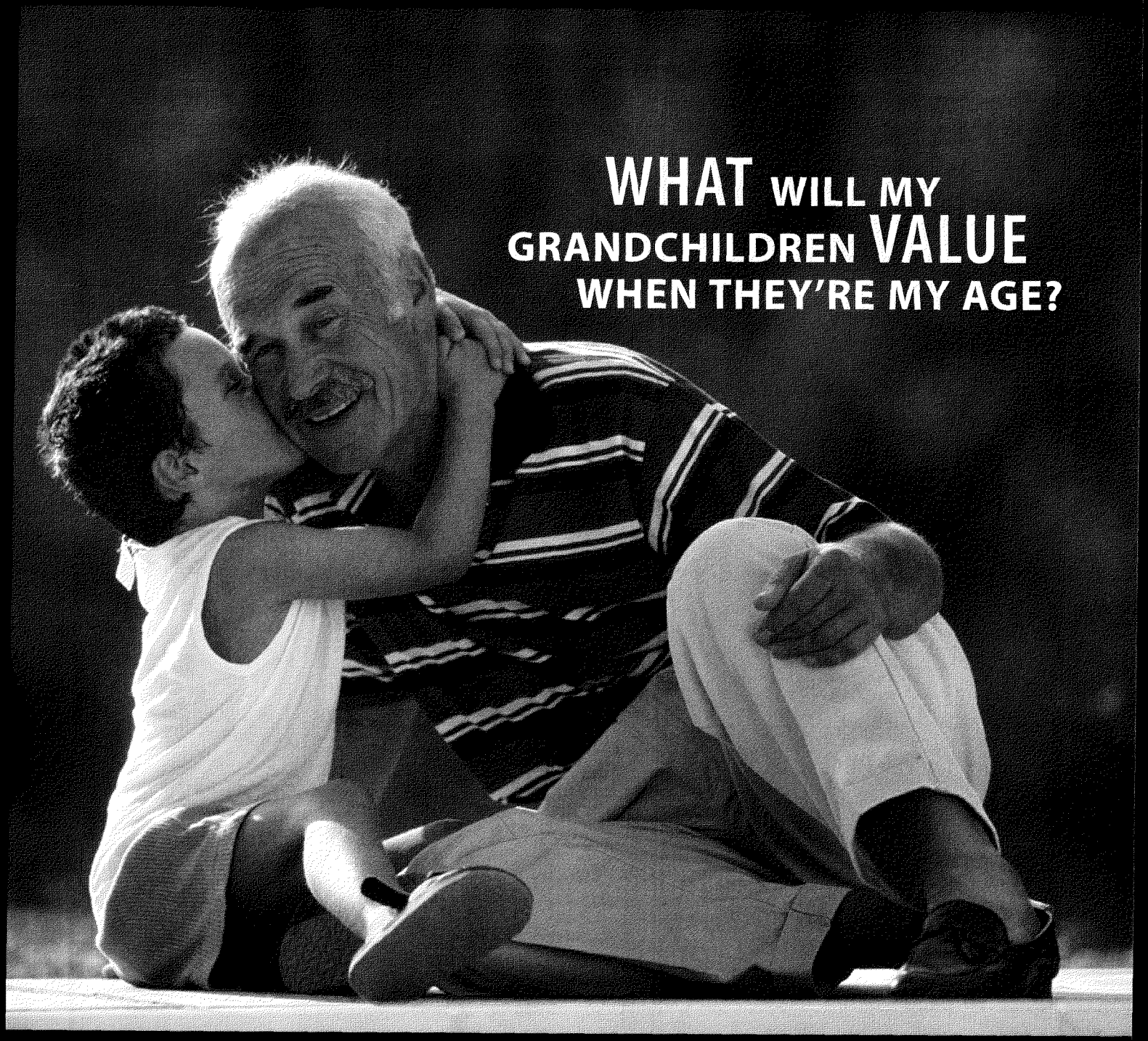

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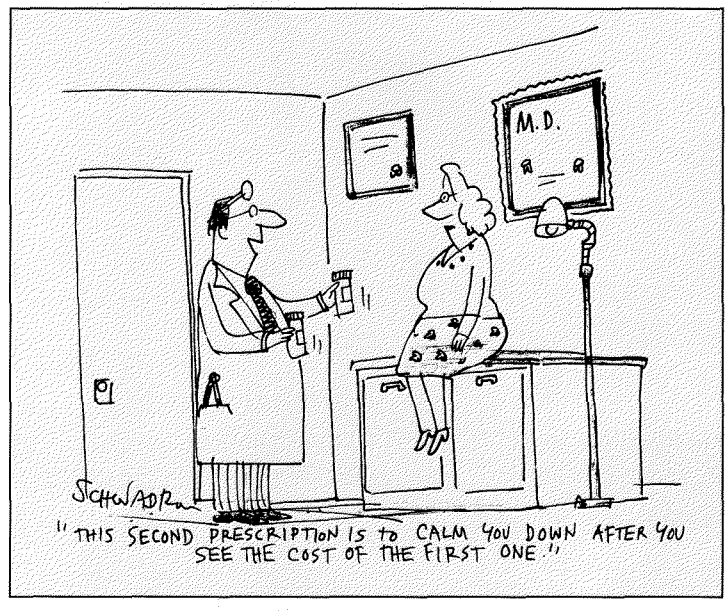

OUTLAWS ON THE BENCH

Regardless of how you feel about the recent ruling by the Massachusetts Supreme Court endorsing same-sex marriage, the key question is this: Who decides?

"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves," said Thomas Jefferson. But there is nothing automatic about that. The Constitution established a government with three equal branches—the legislative, which makes the laws; the executive, which carries them out; and the judicial, which interprets them. No branch is subservient to the other.

The Constitution also guarantees that the states will have this republican form of government. But Massachusetts no longer does. The legislature went to the supreme court virtually begging to be allowed to pass a civil-unions law similar to that in Vermont. But the court ruled, by a four-to-three vote, that only full same-sex marriage would do—and the legislature had better be quick about it.

Not to be outdone, the city of San Francisco began issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples. This was in direct violation of state law. It also violated the 2000 vote by 61 percent of Californians—an electoral landslide—in favor of the ballot proposition that defined marriage solely as a union between a man and a woman. Apparently voters' decisions and laws on the books are both floutable.

The reason some officials feel free to ignore democratic verdicts is because they know they can find a judge somewhere who will support their power play. Our self-anointed judicial elites believe they know better than the common people.

So after thousands of years of precedent, marriage is now being redefined, and the effects on the family, especially children, will be profound. Surely such a momentous change should be carefully considered. There should be input of religious and secular scholars, debate by the people until an agreement is reached, and then careful enactment by the people's representatives meeting in a legislature.

If that process had been followed for the abortion drama, there would be much less bitterness today. But the U.S. Supreme Court simply decided the matter itself. Having learned nothing, courts are now short-circuiting the decision-making process on gay marriage and taking matters into their own hands.

This is extremely dangerous. More and more, courts decide, often by slim margins, the most weighty matters, and then cram their decisions down the throats of the legislature, the executive, and the people.

As long as the decision corresponds with one's personal beliefs, many people see no problem. You believe in legalized abortion? Then it's no problem for you that the Supreme Court forbade Congress and state legislatures from passing laws to regulate it. You support same-sex marriage? Then you nod approval when four people in black robes in Massachusetts give orders to legalize it, grinning that the "full faith and credit" clause of the Constitution will probably force all 294 million Americans, 65 percent of whom disapprove of same-sex marriage, to accept it as well.

But what if courts decide to impose some other ruling on you, and this time you *don't* agree with it? What then?

You say we're protected by the U.S. and state constitutions. Really? Today we can't know what the law is by reading the Constitution or studying law books. We must read the newspaper to find the latest court ruling. "Law" that is unpredictable, arbitrary, and changed by whim isn't law at all, but a dictatorial decree. It loses any moral claim.

If this continues, we will have no real Constitution at all. We will be ruled by emperors in black robes. What will you do when your favorite right disappears?

Of course, by then it will be too late.

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You've already agreed that the Constitution is a "living document" to be changed and enforced by members of the judicial branch, even when they blatantly ignore the separation of powers on which our democracy and freedoms rest.

What is decided in the gay-marriage case will affect the future of the family. *Who* decides will affect the future of the country.

—**David Stolinsky** *is a California writer and physician.*

JOHN KERRY'S JUDGMENT

Upon arriving home from service in Vietnam, John F. Kerry sniffed the political wind in Massachusetts—the only state carried by George McGovern—and decided there was hay to be made opposing the war. The hero enlisted in Vietnam Veterans Against the War, nobly serving with Vietcong-lovers such as Jane Fonda and Ramsey Clark in the so-called Winter Soldier Investigation. Kerry had no qualms about marching with scruffy Marxists carrying Vietcong flags and signs with slogans praising Ho Chi Minh, Kim Il Sung, and Fidel Castro.

And it wasn't enough merely to oppose the war. Kerry had to smear his former comrades-in-arms as a bunch of degenerate, mutilating, baby killers. The man who's now running for the highest office in the land on his war record—and beats his chest over his medals with every other breath—told a Senate hearing that Americans then bleeding and dying in the rice paddies were the moral equivalent of the Waffen-SS.

In his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (April 23, 1971), Kerry charged that American soldiers had "raped, cut off ears, taped wires from portable telephones to human genitals and turned up the power, cut off limbs, blown up bodies, randomly shot at civilians, razed villages, shot cattle and dogs for fun, poisoned food stocks, and generally ravaged the countryside of Vietnam."

No wonder a group of Vietnam vets turned their backs on Kerry when he spoke at the Vietnam War Memorial in 2002. General George S. Patton (namesake of the World War II general)—who led troops into combat in Vietnam—said Kerry "gave aid and comfort to the enemy." Jeremiah Denton—who was being tortured at the Hanoi Hilton while Kerry was defaming American forces in Vietnam—could barely maintain civility toward the Massachusan when they served together in the Senate.

If Americans in Vietnam were butchers and war criminals, what were the Vietcong? Agrarian reformers, one and all, according to the sage of Boston. In those halcyon days of pot and protest, Kerry insisted the conflict was a "war of the people" fought by indigenous peasant reformers. The senator-to-be apparently had never heard of North Vietnamese regulars, Soviet instigators, or the Ho Chi Minh trail.

Kerry didn't just want an American withdrawal. He demanded elimination of all aid to Saigon. If South Vietnam fell, at most 2,000 to 3,000 of its lackeys might face recrimination, Kerry assured us.

Actually, an estimated 700,000 Vietnamese went through communist re-education camps after Saigon became Ho Chi Minh City. Many never came out. More than a million boat people fled those good-hearted indigenous peasant reformers. The fall of South Vietnam led immediately to the fall of Laos and Cambodia—and the genocide of their killing fields.

Now Kerry is promoting his foreign policy instincts as a Presidential credential?

When it comes to communism, terrorism, and thugocracies, Kerry is hopelessly naive—or willfully blind. As a senator, he fought against American aid to the government of El Salvador during the communist insurgency of the 1980s. He also opposed support for the freedom-fighting Nicaraguan Contras. He's not known to have uttered a word of criticism about Cuban intervention in the Central American conflicts or to have denounced Soviet imperialism. Oh, and our rescue mission to Grenada was "a bully's show of force against a weak, Third World nation."

WHAT THE MONDAY MORNING QUARTERBACKS WERE SAYING ON SUNDAY MORNING

John Kerry speech at Georgetown University, January 23, 2003

Without question, we need to disarm Saddam Hussein. He is a brutal, murderous dictator, leading an oppressive regime. We all know the litany of his offenses. He presents a particularly grievous threat because he is so consistently prone to miscalculation.... And now he is miscalculating America's response to his continued deceit and his consistent grasp for weapons of mass destruction.... The threat of Saddam Hussein with weapons of mass destruction is real.

***New York Times* editorial, February 15, 2003**

There is ample evidence that Iraq has produced highly toxic VX nerve gas and anthrax and has the capacity to produce a lot more.... In our judgment, Iraq is not disarming. The only way short of war to get Saddam Hussein to reverse course at this late hour is to make clear that the Security Council is united in its determination to disarm him and is now ready to call in the cavalry to get the job done. America and Britain are prepared to take that step. The time has come for the others to quit pretending that inspections alone are the solution.... The Security Council doesn't need to sit through more months of inconclusive reports. It needs full and immediate Iraqi disarmament. It needs to say so, backed by the threat of military force.

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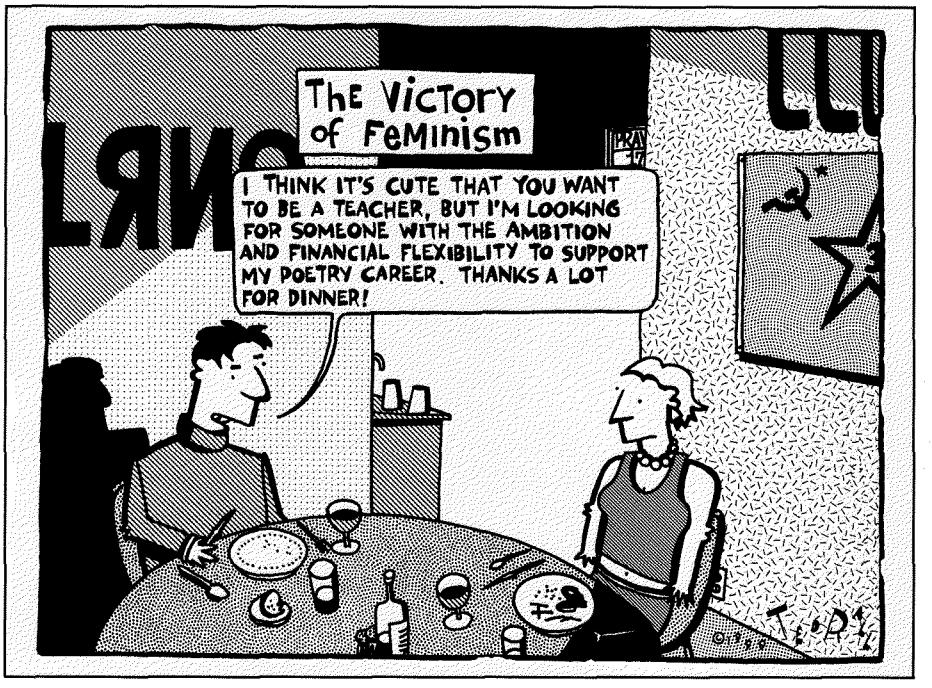

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While Ronald Reagan was winning the Cold War, Senator Kerry was trying to hamstring the effort. He opposed the MX missile, B-1 bomber, and a missile defense system. Had the war hero prevailed, the Kremlin could still be in business, opening branch offices around the world.

In 1991, Kerry voted against the first Gulf War. The Massachusetts military expert predicted that body bags would be coming in by the thousands. Chagrined at being on the wrong side of Kuwait's successful liberation, and with the collapse of the World Trade Center still echoing in his ears, Kerry voted to authorize the second President Bush to use military force to rid humanity of Saddam Hussein.

But wait, that's not what he really meant, the senator explains. He was merely voting to give Bush the authority to spend the next decade in a futile quest for the U.N.'s approval. This can be described as "How to support a war (in theory), while keeping your head-in-the-sand credentials intact for the surrender wing of the Democratic Party."

Kerry has even found time to bestow understanding on Colombia's drug-dealing FARC terrorists. A year ago, in a speech in Boston, Kerry described Colombia's narcotics-driven insurgency as "fueled partly by guerillas who have legitimate complaints." Try imagining Kerry as Commander in Chief in the war on terror. Surely al-Qaeda has some legitimate complaints. Will he empathize with its killers?

John Kerry is a man whose time came and went—roughly 30 years ago. He could be elected president of Hollywood, president of the Ivy League, president of the National Council of Churches, president of the Dixie Chicks, or president of CNN. But President of the United States? Only if the American people have a complete and total memory failure.

—**Don Feder** *is a media consultant and former syndicated columnist. This is adapted from frontpagemag.com.*

BUILDING A BAD MEMORIAL

The wrangling over what kind of memorial to construct at the site of the World Trade Center is over. The jury has chosen architect Michael Arad and landscape architect Peter Walker's "Reflecting Absence"—two pools of water in the footprints of the Twin Towers, surrounded by paving and trees.

That choice is a disappointment. Many have called the leading entries unimaginative or formulaic. But there is an even deeper problem: the unseemliness of placing an aching memorial to victims in a location where tens of thousands of people will have to confront it day after day. One can sympathize with those who lost family members or friends in the terrorist attack while rejecting the idea that New York must perpetually relive the anguish of that terrible event.

Through most of human history, public monuments were erected to leaders and heroes who guided a nation through trials so dangerous as to deserve permanent commemoration. In the U.S., the two greatest examples are the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. Americans value those memorials because they celebrate men who persevered through years of struggle to attain profound national goals.

What the winning designers envision in New York City is very different. Rather than occupying a site that stands apart from everyday activities, the memorialization of 2,982 deaths at the World Trade Center is to be plunked in the midst of downtown commerce and random comings and goings. From thousands of surrounding workplaces occupants will look down on ghostly voids.

If the memorial conveyed a message of valor and hope, there could be reason to award it such a large and visible site. But those who died in New York were—with heroic exceptions such as firefighters and other rescuers—victims caught unaware in the midst of office work. As much as our hearts go out to them and to their survivors, we cannot pretend they were knowingly engaged in a national mission, as soldiers are. It is abnormal, and disturbing, to set aside 4 1/2 acres in our nation's financial heart for a permanent reminder of victimization.

Turning the 200' x 200' footprints of the Towers into a pair of pools sunk 30 feet below street level is likely to create a funereal atmosphere. The emptiness is

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too stark, the symbolism too lacking in positive meaning. The inclination will be for viewers to think, "I, too, could be killed in an instant by a wanton attack." Thrusting an intimation of unexpected death into the daily consciousness of our largest city cannot serve a healthy purpose.

Patricia Reilly, speaking for the Coalition of 9/11 Families, recently said her group asked architect Arad to place some of the wreckage of the Twin Towers above ground "so that passersby can have a visual connection with the enormity of that day." But why should passersby be prodded constantly to relive a trauma? An unhealthy tendency to dwell on the negative seems to be part of modern culture, and we need to be wary of making death a centerpiece of our society. The memorial should not turn an American catastrophe into a wound that will not be permitted to heal.

Some have suggested better ideas. Frederick Turner, a professor at the University of Texas at Dallas, argued for creating memorial gardens on the roofs of replacement towers. He notes that the victims worked and perished not in the Twin Towers' crude substructure, where all memorialization is now focused, but rather "a thousand feet above." Elevated gardens are more fitting than a sunken memorial, Turner suggests. They might console our spirits rather than depress them.

Choosing a more proper setting and form for a memorial would also aid the important task of making Lower Manhattan a flourishing part of the city. As New York architect Steve Bass observes, the goal of recreating a living, vital network of streets and buildings, which seemed so important early in the planning, now "is not on the agenda."

Unless better judgment kicks in soon, a critical chunk of Manhattan is going to take on an atmosphere of futility and permanent "absence" inappropriate to our dynamic, unvanquishable civilization. Reconsideration is urgently needed.

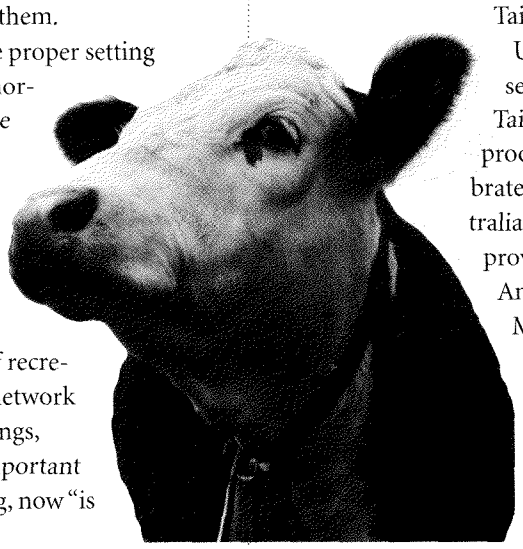
—TAE *contributing writer* **Philip Langdon** *is senior editor of* New Urban News. *A longer version of this ran in the* Hartford Courant.

MAD COW SANITY

Consumers seem to be taking the mad cow news in stride. To date, no sales declines are reported from the fast food chains, and some of the premium steakhouses have even increased demand. Perhaps yellow journalism no longer has much effect.

Although news stories about mad cow disease often describe the horrors of the affliction for several paragraphs, David Ropeik of the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis points out that the risk of actually contracting the human variant from meat is virtually nonexistent. Extensive and careful scientific studies in Britain and elsewhere have never, ever, found any evidence that eating beef can cause the disease in humans.

If the health threats from mad cow have been oversold, the economic damage has not. Over 30 countries have banned imports of beef from the U.S., and beef prices have dropped 20 percent. Taiwan has banned U.S. beef for seven years. Taiwanese beef producers can celebrate, as will Australians, who will provide the beef that Americans cannot. Many have used the occasion to complain about the structure of agriculture, equating mad cow disease with the evils of corporate agriculture and factory farms. But beef farming may be the last redoubt of small farms, with almost all cows raised on family-owned farms and ranches.



Perhaps the measured response to the mad cow outbreak by consumers and the U.S. Department of Agriculture signals the dawn of a new maturity among the American public. Maybe after years of fearmongering and breathless reporting, we're finally learning to respond to risk in a reasonable fashion. We'll eat our way through the beef that would have normally gone to foreign customers, and their loss will contribute to our Atkins diets. The beef supply is safe, and maybe, just maybe, the next environmental scare or food threat will be reported in a more rational way.

—**Blake Hurst** *and his family enjoy beef raised on their own Missouri farm.*

SCHOOL DAZE

At UCLA, students of an upper-level class on literacy theory must complete 30 hours of community service at an underperforming school. Sounds great, right? Until you find out that the after-school program, called the "Fifth Dimension," invites children to write letters to a dual-gendered, multi-ethnic entity named El Maga (the wizard), that the kids are encouraged to "emote culturally" no matter how inappropriate their ideas or language (references to violence and drugs are just fine), and that the student teachers are not allowed to restrict anything the children say or do. Nor may teachers refer to themselves as "experts"—that would only further the hateful "hierarchical structures present in modern day schooling."

This program is funded by citizens of the state of California. Perhaps some of them should emote culturally to the governor and state assembly and ask for an end to this silliness.

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MISSING WALT

"We are managing this company for one thing, and only for one thing.... You can count on us to exploit every opportunity to grow revenues." —*January 8, 2001, Sumner Redstone, CEO of Viacom, which broadcast Super Bowl 2004.*

I miss Walt Disney.

I thought about him during the Super Bowl half-time show—even before Justin Timberlake ripped Janet Jackson's bustier off and her boob popped out. During the crotch-grabbing, bump-grinding, Spring-Break-meets-Bachelor-Party musical numbers that preceded theirs, I wondered what Walt—who insisted his actresses wear one-piece swimsuits in their beach scenes—would say. Just a guess: "I told you so," he'd reply with a grin. "See what happens when you let the kids show their navels?"

The kind, firm entrepreneur with the trimmed mustache guarded America's children throughout the '50s and '60s, a shepherd protecting his flock. Plenty of wolves out there, kids, he seemed to say. Stick with me, I'll keep you safe.

The wolves have run amok, Walt. And they're after our kids.

They take their predatory cue from the Pied Piper of Viacom, chairman and CEO Sumner Redstone. Redstone likes to brag that Viacom's quasi-pornographic MTV, with over 300 million viewers, "has helped shaped the culture of generations of young people across the globe." Yikes.

It's no secret that his empire orchestrated the Super Bowl festivities. Viacom owns both CBS and MTV. Apparently we're now at the point where parents have to figure these things out, expect sleaze even in the most mainstream broadcasts, keep our fingers constantly on the remote, or hide the kids in a television-free zone. Or plunk them, at least, in front of Nickelodeon. That's safe, right?

Guess again. Viacom also owns the Rugrat station—and uses it to promote MTV. I discovered this four years ago, when I heard tha-thumping coming from the family room television. "Hey, what're you watching, Michelle?" I called to my then-ten-year old. "Oh, don't worry, Mom," she shouted back. "It's just a commercial for the MTV Video Music Awards—they show it all the time."

Stunned, I put in couch time with Nick. During "Slime Time Live," the host urged kids to log onto Nick.com to vote for their favorite daily "Video Pick." I did, and there it was: "Your favorite MTV Video Music Award nominees." Over subsequent weeks, Nickelodeon promoted to the kids heartwarming acts like Lil' Kim, Limp Bizkit, Snoop Dogg, and (my personal Parent's Choice for being a sweetheart of a guy) Eminem.

The morning after The Breast Incident I checked—on a mother hunch—the Nick.com Web site. If Nickelodeon had promoted MTV in the past, surely there would be tie-ins to the MTV-packed Super Bowl. I didn't have to look hard. The first page that popped up posted a Super Bowl Half Time opinion poll for the under-12 set: "Whose half-time show rocked?" the poll asked, "Janet Jackson, Nelly, P. Diddy, or Kid Rock?"

While Viacom's corporate Web site posted "oops-we-didn't-mean-to-do-that" apologies from CBS and MTV, it offered no mea culpa to kid viewers via Nick.com. Why apologize for being cool? Viacom wants its kindergarten-and-up viewers to be curious about Jackson and Timberlake and the half-time lap dancers. (Hear those wolves howling?) It wants to get them comfortable with the MTV brand early on; keep 'em watching into their teens, and watch the money pour in (over $24 billion in annual revenues). Parents need to realize that Nickelodeon isn't just SpongeBob Square Pants: It's a gateway station to sexed-up MTV. With 85 million-plus viewers, Nickelodeon offers the perfect cross-marketing drug for Viacom. Kids love it; parents assume they can trust it.

Three years ago, the Federal Trade Commission published a report scarier than a half-time show romanticizing sexual assault: Corporate America routinely cross-markets harmful, adult-oriented products to children. Shortly after the report's release, Sumner Redstone did a guest spot on San Francisco's Ronn Owens talk radio program, pumping his memoir, *A Passion to Win*, and painting himself as a simple, family-oriented guy. I called in. "If kids are so important to you, Mr. Redstone," I asked, "why do you let Nickelodeon market MTV to them?" He ignored the question and launched into a riff on how Nickelodeon reflects cultural diversity and should be emulated.

Click. End of call.

Wish Walt Disney could phone in from wherever he is. You were a good shepherd, Walt. We miss you.

—*The home of Californian* **Christine Parsons** *is no longer a profit center for Nickelodeon.*

GETTING THE PICTURE

Actor John Travolta isn't exactly a poster boy for wholesome entertainment. His own work includes roles in notably violent films like *Pulp Fiction*. But in a sign of the times, even Travolta has become disgusted by the shortage of family movies today. So much so that he and four of his siblings have set up their own production company to work on the problem. Joseph Travolta says the L.A.-based Travolta Family Films group aims to help restore the tradition of movie-viewing by parents and children as a group. "We felt like there's a serious need for more movies that the whole family can go out and see together. Right now, we have three or four in development, with a remake of *Black Beauty* in pre-production."

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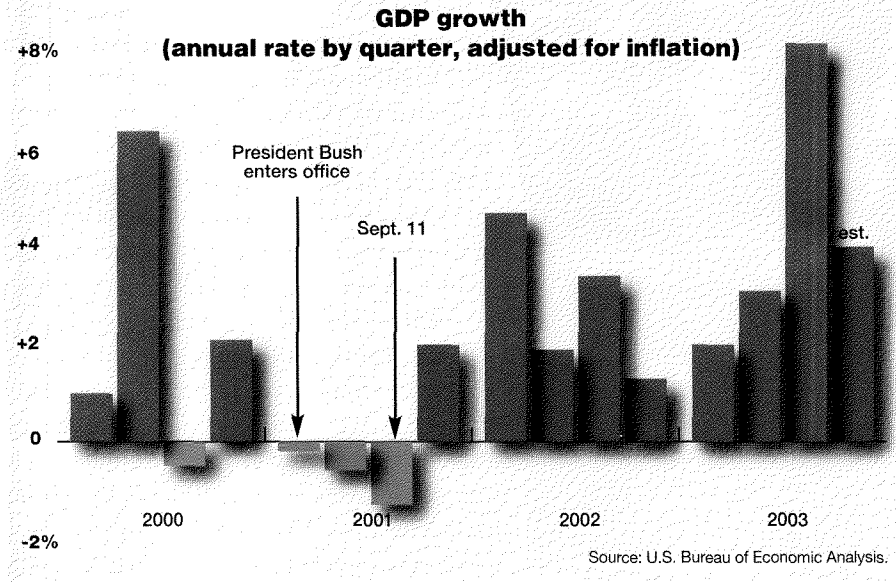
By Karl Zinsmeister and Eli Lehrer

Indicators

WHOSE RECESSION?

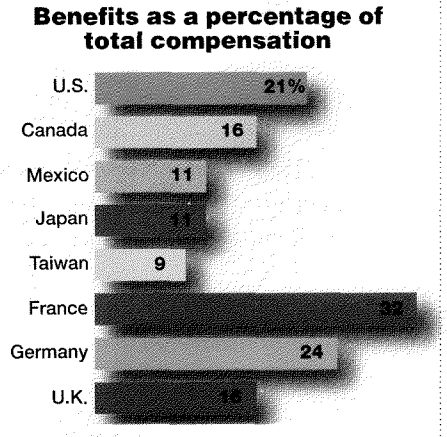
New data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis show that the American economy edged into recession months before President Bush even began his term in office, and that within seven months of his inauguration the economy was again growing. Those looking to blame the President for the mild recession that took place in 2000-2001 had best look elsewhere.



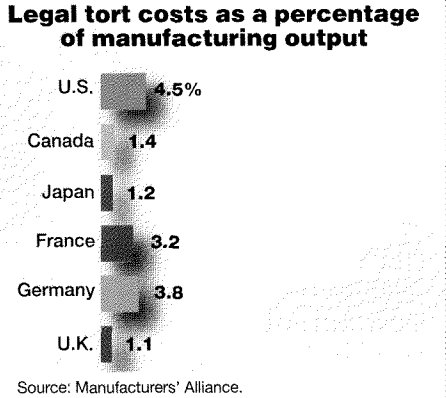
Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

MANUFACTURING HURDLES

A recent study by the National Association of Manufacturers points to two factors that reduce the ability of U.S. factories to remain competitive and keep manufacturing jobs alive: the cost of benefits (primarily health insurance and Social Security taxes), and legal costs (due to lawsuits). These particularly harm companies facing Asian competitors.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

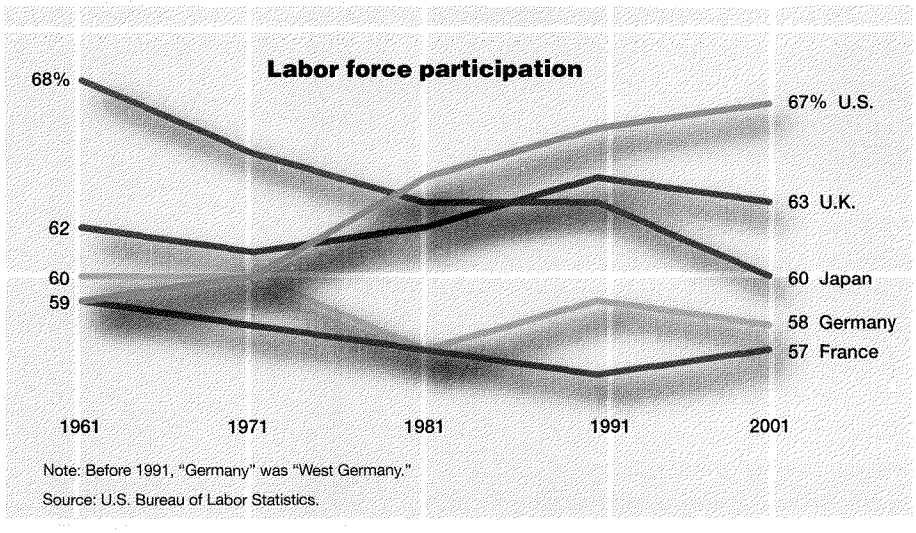


Source: Manufacturers' Alliance.

THE WORK ETHIC

It's desirable that some working-age people stay out of the labor force—to care for their children, to go to school, and so forth. But there are many reasons for not working that are socially undesirable: receiving welfare benefits, serving time in prison, collecting disability payments, sloth.

Over the last four decades, most wealthy countries have become less hard working. The clearest exception is the United States—which now has the highest labor force participation among major nations.



Note: Before 1991, "Germany" was "West Germany."
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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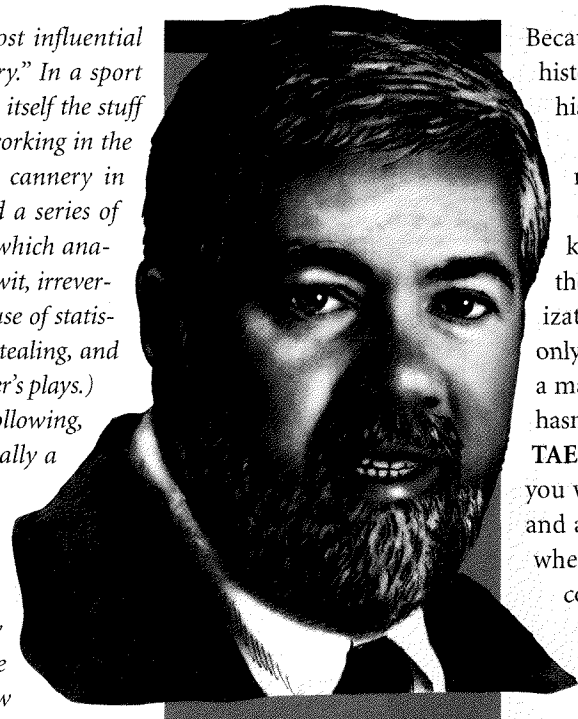
"Live" with TAE

He is the guru who invented a whole new way for Americans to partake of the national pastime from their reading chairs. More recently he has gone to work in the major leagues to see if he can translate his baseball theories into wins on the field. Meet an American sporting icon.

Bill James



Bill James has been called "the most influential baseball writer in the sport's history." In a sport shrouded in myth, James's success is itself the stuff of legend. Thirty years ago, while working in the boiler room of a pork and beans cannery in Lawrence, Kansas, James produced a series of self-published Baseball Abstracts, *which analyzed the game and its players with wit, irreverence, and the orthodoxy-smashing use of statistics. (Using James's logic, bunting, stealing, and the use of a bullpen "closer" are sucker's plays.)*

The Abstracts *attracted a cult following, then major publishers, and eventually a wide readership that included, among others, future Boston Red Sox general manager Theo Epstein.*

Michael Lewis's recent best-seller, Moneyball, *described how the Oakland A's have used the insights of James and his fellow "sabermetricians" to outfox far wealthier teams. Last season, after years of writing his mordantly erudite fan notes, Bill James left the bleachers and joined the game as a senior baseball operations adviser for the Boston Red Sox.*

Kansas historian Tim Rives interviewed Bill James at the Emerson Biggins sports bar in Lawrence, Kansas.

TAE: Just what does a so-called "sabermetrician" do?

JAMES: The human mind searches for order in everything it perceives. What a sabermetrician does is search for order and patterns—objective proof—on questions that are debated by baseball people. Sabermetrics starts with the question, "What are the characteristics of winning teams?" and then moves to "*Why* are these things characteristics of winning teams?"

We take an historical approach to the game. Because baseball is inherently meaningless, its history is more clear and less clouded than the history of things that are meaningful.

And we rely heavily on statistics (though no good analysis in any sport is driven solely by statistics). I've tried for 25 years to keep sabermetrics from being taken over by the bad habits of academicians—overspecialization, discussing issues that are of interest only to other academics, and discussing them in a manner which is inaccessible to anyone who hasn't been following the discussion for years.

TAE: Was there a specific Eureka! moment for you when you were working at the bean plant and analyzing patterns in baseball on the side when you realized you had something that could become your vocation?

JAMES: Well, there was a period when all of my friends were getting married and I was going to weddings and talking to people. And it seemed like at every wedding I would run into somebody who was fascinated by my baseball analysis. Most of the world was trying to tell me I would never earn my keep by doing this. But I began to think, "If these people are so interested in what I'm doing, how can it not be possible to make a living at it?"

TAE: Michael Lewis's *Moneyball* cast sabermetricians as heroes and the old-school baseball men as hidebound dunces. Was the book widely read by people in major league baseball? Did it cause you—as one of its heroes—any discomfort?

JAMES: None whatsoever. I think it may have caused a few awkward moments for Billy Beane [the Oakland A's general manager], but hell, Billy can handle that. The book was very kind to me, and I appreciate that. I didn't read the book as portraying old-school baseball men as hidebound dunces. Nobody who has talked to me about it was offended.

Barry Bonds may be as good as Babe Ruth, but Ruth had more impact.

Illustration by Paul Loughran

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TAE: You write, "The most important discovery I've made is the fact that you can predict a player's major league batting performance based on his minor league record."

JAMES: But you can't sit back and wait, or the system doesn't work well. What happens is that by the time guys have proven they can play in the minors, they're too old to be really valuable in the majors. So you have to keep ahead of the curve. That's why the guys who are the best players in the majors often didn't succeed brilliantly in the minors—because they weren't given time to.

TAE: Is Barry Bonds the best player of our era?

JAMES: By far.

TAE: Was Babe Ruth the finest player in the history of the majors?

JAMES: Yes. Mays may have been as good, Honus Wagner may have been as good, Bonds may be as good. But Ruth had more impact.

TAE: You write, "There's a good argument that Roger Clemens is the greatest pitcher who ever lived." What can we expect now that he's in the National League?

JAMES: The National League and the American League draw talent from the same pools. Players go back and forth from one to the other. They use the same umpires, sometimes the same fields. Many of the differences people see as existing between the two leagues are totally the product of the imagination. The only real difference is that Clemens will now get two easy strikeouts a game from facing the pitcher. His strikeout rate will go up. And I suspect he himself will turn out to be a pretty decent hitter, despite his age.

TAE: What is it that kills old pitchers? Is it injuries?

JAMES: It's attrition, or injuries to put it another way. If you start with a pool of a thousand 25-year-old pitchers, and every year 15 percent of them get hurt, then eventually, sometime in their forties, you're going to reach a point where there just aren't any more of them left. That's more or less what happens in baseball. It's not that the injury rates accelerate as pitchers age, it's just that eventually there aren't any of them left.

TAE: Do you think the modern truncated pitching motion has hurt pitchers?

JAMES: I don't think it's helped. I think the modern, efficient motion has more to do with orthodoxy than with wisdom. But I don't know that it's causing injuries.

TAE: More American kids now play soccer than baseball. And on a Sunday afternoon in the middle of June you can, as I found last summer, go looking for baseball on TV and find everything but, from NFL Europe to women's golf. What, if anything, can be done to halt baseball's slide in popularity?

JAMES: I advocate a Constitutional amendment against playing soccer.

Seriously, the problem is that baseball is not a television game, and the television era has not been particularly good to baseball. To be fair, professional baseball tolerates an unconscionable amount of standing around and posturing, and this makes it less exciting than it ought to be and therefore less attractive to young people. I think there's a growing recognition of this, but the problem is that even when one recognizes the problem it's very hard to fix. People in baseball are working on it, however.

Also: An awful lot of popularity trends are cyclical, and I do believe that in the future, when the game is played crisply at the highest levels, people will realize what an exciting game it is, and remember that it's fun.

TAE: You've advocated a number of changes to speed up games, such as thickening the barrels of today's whippet-thin bats, limiting time outs, limiting pitchers, etc. A couple of years ago, some suggested limiting the number of intentional walks. You might call this the Barry Bonds Rule.

JAMES: I think intentional walks should be limited, but among the things that slow down baseball games intentional walks don't rank in the top 50.

I suggest a batter should be able to decline a walk. Not only an intentional walk, but any walk. The batter's team should able to say, "No thanks, I don't want that walk." And if you walk him again, he goes to second base and anybody already on moves up two bases. The reason that should be the rule is because the walk was created to force the pitcher to throw hittable pitches to the batter. That is the walk's natural function. To allow the walk to become something the defense can use to its advantage with no response from the offense is illogical and counterproductive.

A batter should be able to decline a walk. Any walk. And if you walk him again, he goes to second, and anybody on base moves up two spots.

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TAE: Don't TV time outs, which break the rhythm of the game, make baseball unendurable for many viewers?

JAMES: I think prolonged TV time outs are a serious mistake, because they do make the game less enjoyable. That depresses both live attendance and viewership. And it also tends to create an artificial surplus of advertising time on baseball games, which drives down the price of advertising minutes.

TAE: In his recent State of the Union speech, President Bush called for a ban on steroids in baseball.

JAMES: I was glad to see it. I think it is a serious issue. It's serious because what professional athletes do now, college athletes will be doing in five years, and high school athletes will be doing in ten years or sooner than that, and there are serious negative health consequences. We can't permit baseball to be a wedge which opens that door. So I was glad to see him pay some attention to it.

TAE: When you see Ugueth Urbina exchange kisses with Ivan Rodriquez after every Florida Marlins victory you realize that the influx of Asians, Latin Americans, Australians, and so forth has brought cultural changes to baseball. Do you think this is ultimately a good thing for the game?

JAMES: It is a good thing for baseball. It is a way in which baseball is very American in the best sense. We live in a society which searches out the best in everything and embraces it without disfavor. We go all over the world looking for baseball players and say, "We don't care how weird you are. We don't care what color you are. We don't care what habits you have. If you can play baseball, we want you." And that's very American.

TAE: Last summer an ESPN baseball writer basically accused sabermetrics of having a cultural/racial bias because it undervalues statistics produced by African-American players.

JAMES: Sabermetric analysis is not one percent kinder to white players than it is to black. The assumption of that writer was that black players have speed and defense but lack the skills which are most respected in sabermetrics. This is absolutely false. Black players have no tendency whatsoever to lack the skills which are most valued in sabermetrics.

Baseball certainly prefers myth to reality. But the human mind searches for order in everything it perceives—including baseball.

TAE: After years of obscurity, the old Negro Leagues have enjoyed a vogue over the last decade. For reasons of political correctness, do writers now overstate the quality of ball in the Negro Leagues?

JAMES: Not at all. The opposite is still the case—more writers than not still underestimate the quality of the play. There were players in those leagues who were as good as Ty Cobb, but whom the average fan has still never heard of.

TAE: Should a team's racial composition ever be a factor when building a club, in terms of "chemistry"? The Florida Marlins reportedly signed Latin players quite consciously because they have a large Latin fan base.

JAMES: It's hard enough to make judgments about baseball players when you make them on the basis of: How fast does he run? How well does he throw? What's he like in the clubhouse? If you start building in irrelevant factors it makes the process not difficult but impossible.

TAE: I've read that you enjoy watching all levels of baseball. Can you apply the same sort of analysis to lower levels of baseball that you do to the major leagues?

JAMES: What I believe to be true about the highest levels of baseball I also believe to be true about the lowest levels of baseball. But some of the fictions that dominate the highest levels of baseball are in place because they are true about lower levels of baseball. For example, one of the primary reasons that people so tremendously overvalue speed in major league baseball is because speed is very important in lower levels of baseball. But as you move up the ladder, the nature of the game changes so it becomes less and less important.

Same with the throwing arm. People overvalue a great throwing arm in right field because that means a great deal among ten-year-olds playing baseball—it's almost like they're an extra infielder. But it means very little at the major league level.

TAE: When the Kansas City Royals play the Red Sox, for whom do you root?

JAMES: The Red Sox, without any mixed feelings at all. The truth is, the Royals from 1996 through 2002 were damned hard to root for when you were trying. It was a relief not having to root for them, although they were a lot more fun in 2003.

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TAE: "Never meet your heroes," goes the adage. After being a fan of baseball for so many years, what was it like moving to the inside? In what ways are baseball people—players and front-office folks—different than what you had expected?

JAMES: The only general manager who was ever a hero of mine was Branch Rickey, who unfortunately I won't meet on this earth.

The Red Sox are so atypical that it is hard to answer this. You know, I consulted in salary negotiations for many years—from 1979 into the early 1990s—so I knew a lot of baseball executives a long time ago. Some of those general managers of the 1980s were really sharp, well-prepared guys. And some of them really weren't.

You walk around the baseball operations office at Fenway today and you've got guys from Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Princeton, USC, Virginia. I've done a lot of things, from magazines to work on a loading dock, and I have never had the opportunity to work with such a fantastic group of people as I do now.

TAE: Do you have a favorite baseball movie?

JAMES: *Bull Durham*. It's subtle, sophisticated, and it works as well now as it did when it was first made.

I tend not to like baseball movies when I first see them. When I first saw *The Natural* I absolutely hated it. Having seen it again, two or three more times, I realize that it's not so bad.

When I first saw *Field of Dreams* I didn't like it either, but I've come to like it. I'm probably just too close to the subject.

TAE: Besides Pete Rose, baseball's other famous exile, Shoeless Joe Jackson, has become something of a sentimental favorite in recent years. Have movies like *Eight Men Out* and *Field of Dreams* whitewashed the sins of the Black Sox, or were Shoeless Joe and Buck Weaver really victims?

JAMES: Recently, a former baseball commissioner suggested Jackson was almost retarded. Where did he get that idea? In the spring of 1918 *The Sporting News* reported that Jackson had invested so wisely in real estate in his home state of South Carolina that with the coming of the war his rental properties were making him more money than his baseball salary.

Have recent movies sentimentalized Joe Jackson? Of course. But I don't think there is any reason to despise Jackson. He wasn't an evil man. He was a man who made a very serious mistake, and paid a fair price for it.

Sports haven't abandoned hardness and strength and masculinity, because they can't. That's the sporting world's way of trying to tell us something.

TAE: You could probably do your job anywhere, yet you stay in Kansas. Is Kansas important to you as part of your personal identity?

JAMES: Lawrence, Kansas, is a very good place to live. We have all the seasons. We have most of the amenities of modern life without traffic and high crime rates and other problems. It's just a good place.

TAE: You've expressed interest in the past in criminal behavior.

JAMES: When I read books about criminals, I always think that there's a fairly subtle difference in habits and ways of thinking about problems that separates me from them. And I'm always trying to put my finger on what it is. Crime books are sort of useful in that they remind you of the consequences of bad decisions.

TAE: Cooperstown, New York—home of the Baseball Hall of Fame—and Dyersville, Iowa—home of the "Field of Dreams"—are the two most popular baseball tourist spots in the country, yet nothing actually happened in either place. Does baseball prefer myth to reality?

JAMES: Baseball certainly prefers myth to reality. That's a part of human nature. All human beings from time out of memory have invented creation myths to explain things.

TAE: What do you see when you compare baseball's past to the present?

JAMES: One of the great differences between present and earlier generations is that those old guys really believed in being tough. They believed that it was important to *make* yourself tough. In our society we try to make each other less tough.

It is certainly true that the athletes of the 1950s and previous were tougher than the athletes of today. But sports are bucking the culture in this respect. Sports are a sort of island in which it is still important to be tougher than the norm. Sports haven't abandoned hardness and strength and masculinity, because they can't. So they're tenaciously hanging onto the concept of being tough when everyone else is trying to get rid of it. I think that's the sporting world's way of trying to tell us something.

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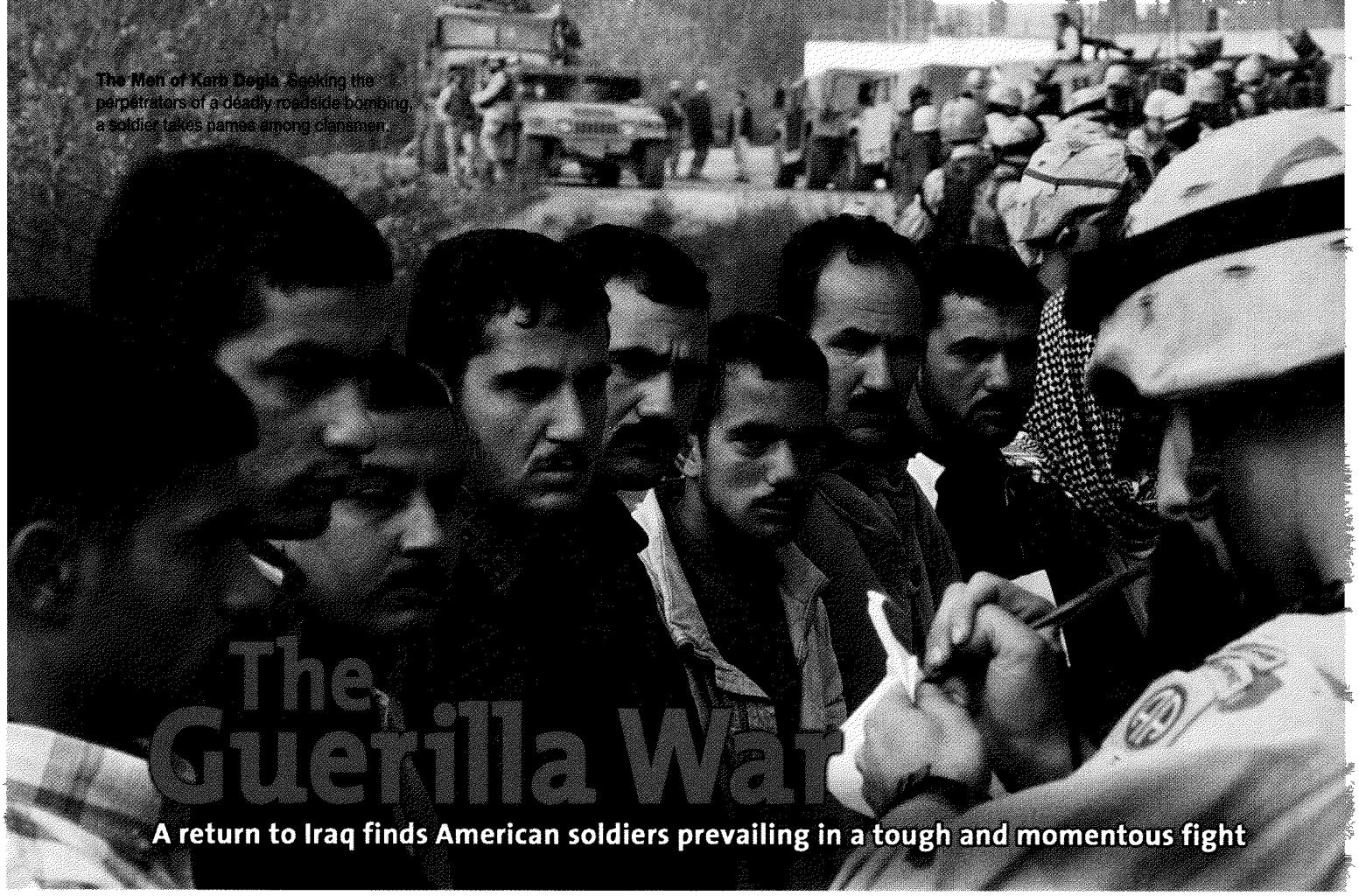

The Men of Karbala Seeking the perpetrators of a deadly roadside bombing, a soldier takes names among clansmen.

The Guerilla War

A return to Iraq finds American soldiers prevailing in a tough and momentous fight

Written and photographed by Karl Zinsmeister

In January of 2004 I returned to Iraq to be re-embedded with American troops. This was my third month in the country out of the past 11, and I came to closely observe combat operations and reconstruction work during the guerilla phase of the Iraq war.

On my very first day in country, I was confronted with reminders of how disruptive even a small minority of fighters can be as this nation tries to mend. A medical helicopter attached to the 82nd Airborne, the division I would spend most of my time with, was shot down (despite being clearly emblazoned with large red crosses) near Fallujah. All nine people aboard—pilots, medics, and injured patients—were killed.

The pressing question faced by American soldiers trying to stabilize Iraq today is how to fight back against such vicious hit-and-run attacks by an obstructionist minority. The simplest answer is that our fighting forces have to both punish and reward. For winning a guerilla war, you see, requires an extremely cagey mix of hard and soft tactics.

Editor in chief Karl Zinsmeister is author of Boots on the Ground, *an account of the spring hot war in Iraq written during his embedding with the 82nd Airborne. His new book about the guerilla phase of the war,* Dawn Over Baghdad: How the U.S. Military is Using Bullets and Ballots to Shape a New Iraq, *will be published in June by Encounter Books.*

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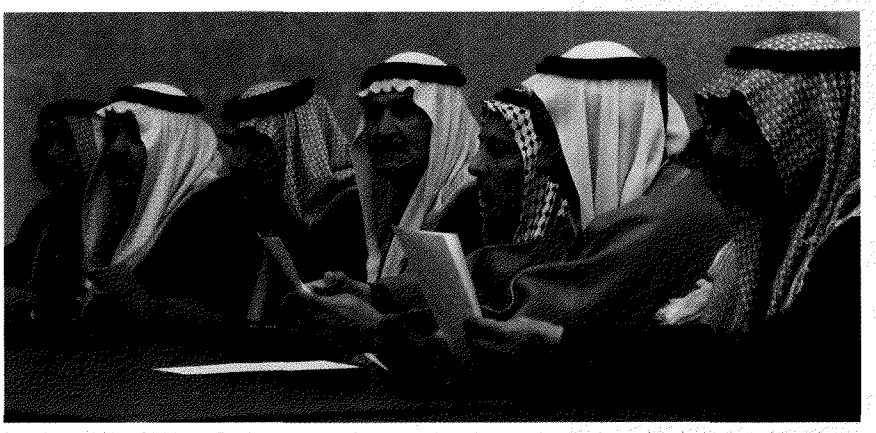
From the onset of the battles in March 2003 right up to the present moment, U.S. military personnel in Iraq have always tried the humane approach first. In place after place, they have fought with uncommon care, going to staggering lengths and taking many risks upon themselves to avoid harming innocent civilians and neighborhoods. They've done this while killing or capturing thousands of enemy combatants who fought shamefully from hospitals, schools, and family homes.

In the pages of this magazine (June 2003) and in *Boots on the Ground*, I have described many extraordinary incidents of disciplined forbearance by American soldiers that I witnessed personally as an embedded reporter. My conclusion is that the fighting on the way to Baghdad last spring amounted to the gentlest war in history.

This temperate, ethical style of engagement has paid dividends. Ordinary Iraqis noticed the care with which U.S. soldiers fought. At the end of the summer just three out of ten Baghdadis said that American troops had behaved badly during the invasion of their country, while six out of ten thought they had behaved well (survey by Gallup). Nationwide research conducted by *The American Enterprise* found that far more Iraqis had a family member, neighbor, or friend killed by the security forces of Saddam Hussein than by the 2003 war.

Even during U.S. bombing and ground raids, I have often seen Iraqis continue to shop and travel the streets—because they know American attackers are not indiscriminate. If you aren't threatening, Iraqis recognize, you are safe around U.S. soldiers. The care with which American fighters have prosecuted their battles is a main reason ordinary Iraqis want nothing to do with the insurgency, and why seven out of ten told *The American Enterprise* and other surveyers in the fall that they hoped U.S. troops would stay at least another year.

Still, there are limits to the gentle approach.



Goodbye to the Old Iraq Back-scratching Sunni sheiks, after nursing the loss of their privileged position under Saddam Hussein for nearly a year, finally request a meeting with the American Army.

CRACKDOWN

The minority of Iraqis who resent the ousting of Saddam Hussein are clustered in the so-called Sunni Triangle. In this area, certain villages, cities, and neighborhoods have slapped away the American olive branch. During the summer and fall, a few recalcitrant hot spots like Fallujah, Ramadi, Samarra, Balad, Tikrit, and parts of Baghdad flamed with guerilla activity. This resistance reached an ugly crescendo around Halloween, when 81 American soldiers and many Iraqi security personnel and innocent civilians were killed in one month by insurgents operating from these seething niches.

At that point, American commanders reached their limit, and all across Iraq the U.S. Army shifted gears. In the first days of November, Generals Charles Swannack (commander of the 82nd Airborne) and John Abizaid (who heads all U.S. military forces in the Middle East) met with sheiks around Fallujah to announce the end of their patience. They made it clear to the assembled Iraqis that after six months of fighting with one hand tied behind their backs, U.S. forces were about to get tough. Unless cooperation from the local populace improved immediately, the region would be squeezed hard.

In other parts of Iraq, other Army units launched similar crackdowns. Around Tikrit, the 4th Infantry Division completely ringed in razor wire Saddam's birthplace of Auja, the village of Abu Hishma (a source of many attacks on Americans), and other locales, cutting off these hubs of insurgency from the rest of the country. Buildings that had been used to launch ambushes were bulldozed or shelled. Relatives of wanted insurgency leaders were arrested, questioned, and held. These measures led directly to the capture of Saddam Hussein.

Troops in the Baghdad area launched "Operation Iron Hammer." An aggressive series of raids brought a surge of detentions and arms seizures. To end mortar attacks on U.S. bases, commanders initiated "harassment and interdiction" fire—each night, all night, artillery rounds were lobbed preemptively into orchards, fields, and abandoned lots where guerillas had been setting up their mortar tubes. Patrols staked out some of these same spots and ambushed the would-be ambushers as they gathered.

Rather than just assuming a defensive posture, soldiers took the action to the insurgents. Because Western reporting has focused mostly on guerilla damage rather than on U.S. countermeasures, few Americans realize how active and successful our soldiers were during the late fall and early winter. Company commanders out in the neighborhoods, military intelligence specialists interrogating detainees, and CIA and Special Forces teams cultivating informants pressed hard for fresh intelligence. Counterattacks were launched as soon as information became available. In November and December, U.S. soldiers carried out around 12,000 patrols and 250 raids each and every week. In the process they killed hundreds of enemy fighters, wounded a similar number, and captured thousands.

The get-tough policy quickly bore fruit. After peaking in October, the number of guerilla attacks began to fall: from 60-70

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per day to 15-20 per day three months later. U.S. casualties tumbled at about the same rate. After Saddam Hussein's arrest on December 13, the violence declined more. February 2004 was the least deadly month yet for American soldiers, with 20 killed (ten less fatalities than in the quietest previous month, June 2003, and only a quarter of the losses suffered in November).

Though a good deal of nihilistic violence (particularly attacks on soft civilian targets) can be expected between now and this summer's transition of power—as remnants of the old Iraq plus outside radicals do their best to prevent the unfolding of a new nation—I saw many signs during my recent month in the most restive parts of the Sunni Triangle that Iraq's resistance has peaked. In signals intercepts, interrogations, and reports from informants, open discouragement is now being heard among the guerillas.

Raiding a Propaganda Shop Soldiers from the 82nd Airborne and the 10th Mountain Division use a battering ram to force entry into a record store which has been peddling violent anti-Coalition tapes and CDs.

"We have killed or captured a large number of the leaders, financiers, and facilitators of the insurgency," states Charles Swannack, commanding general of the 82nd Airborne soldiers policing a third of the country. "A lot of good Iraqi people are tired of the violence and want to help the Coalition. About 50 percent of the time or even more, we're receiving tips that tell us exactly where the roadside bombs are, for instance, and we go and dismantle them. So recent attacks have been much less effective in terms of injuries and equipment damage."

Through trial and error, fusing the hard and soft warfighting tactics of carrot and stick, U.S. leaders in Iraq are edging closer to something significant that many Americans since the Vietnam era have doubted we were capable of: the winning of a guerilla war.

Without question, there remains a good deal of dirty work to be carried out in Iraq. And American soldiers and Marines are the ones stepping up to do it.

Each Friday, U.S. soldiers and plainclothes translators are sent out to record the sermons broadcast from many of Iraq's mosques. The tapes are translated and checked for incitements to violence. At 1145 on January 2, 2004, two armored humvees belonging to Bravo Company of the 2nd Battalion of the 82nd Airborne's 325th Regiment set off to monitor one of the 44 mosques in their battalion's district—a large swath of southwestern Baghdad. The soldiers in this patrol had been in Iraq for ten months; in just 16 days they would be relieved to head back home to the States.

As they approached a sharp bend in a rural road, the second truck was hit by a powerful roadside bomb believed to consist of three large artillery shells wired together. The thickly plated vehicle was shredded. Marc Seiden, a popular trooper from New Jersey, took the brunt of the blast in the front passenger seat and was killed instantly. Gunner Solomon Bangayan, who was born and schooled in the Philippines before moving with his family to Vermont, was also killed as he stood exposed in the gun truck's turret. The driver had his arm flayed and took shrapnel in his throat and neck, but survived. The fourth soldier was ejected from the vehicle as it rolled, and pinned under the wreckage for more than an hour until it could be lifted off his smashed leg.

There's a chance that those involved in planting the IED (improvised explosive device) were co-conspirators of the man American soldiers know as Sheik Thoma. Leader of a small mosque just south of where the ambush took place, Thoma (along with some other Sunni clerics) had been preaching harsh anti-American rhetoric to his flock since Saddam's overthrow. Then he went even further. On June 14, U.S. soldiers in two vehicles passing through an intersection were astonished to see the imam leap to his feet at a roadside and attempt to fire a rocket at them. A rank amateur in military matters, Thoma was unable to activate the shoulder-fired weapon, and a pair of IEDs he and two other men had planted failed to explode. The sheik broke into a run, pursued by soldiers who soon dragged him to the ground.

While I was with them in the first week of January, the paratroopers who collared Thoma were preparing to testify against him at trial one or two days hence. Then they learned he had escaped custody a day before the proceedings by crawling under some barbed wire while an inattentive M.P. was distracted. It was

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a frustrating loss. Thoma was not only a trigger-puller himself, but also a public figure who incited other Iraqis to violence in his poor neighborhood in an elbow of the Tigris River.

Soldiers, though, generally don't wring their hands; they act. The response of the battalion in charge of the area where the fatal IED was planted was to organize a large cordon-and-search mission. Exactly one week after the deaths of Seiden and Bangayan, I sit through final planning meetings for "Operation Tidal Wave," a sweep by about 4,000 paratroopers to take place at dawn on January 11. It is set to commence symbolically with 15 minutes of aerial fire on three sites in this neighborhood from which ambushes have been launched, including the spot where the IED hit Bravo Company's armored humvee—a kind of calling card declaring, "The U.S. remembers what happened here." Then soldiers will flush through an area of small farms, orchards, mud huts, and rural and urban housing, combing homes and fields for hidden weapons, known fugitives like Thoma, and roadside bombs pre-positioned for future use.

In addition to the hundreds of routine weekly patrols, meetings, traffic stops, rebuilding projects, and raids that the 82nd uses to administer this Al Rashid region—home to about 1.5 million Baghdadis—several thousand soldiers are mobilized for a mass action of this sort every few weeks. Each time they go, the Iraqi soldiers and policemen that the 82nd has been training play a slightly more prominent role. "This time I want the ICDC [Iraqi Civil Defense Corps] and Iraqi Police right out front and center," Lieutenant Colonel Dave Haight tells his men. "This is a good chance for residents to see them as a significant force that is going to have to be reckoned with in the future."

READING THE RIOT ACT

Commander Haight not only runs military operations, he also holds political meetings, dispenses rebuilding aid and advice, and otherwise fulfills the duties that go with being, effectively, the prince of his region. He has been meeting weekly with a circle of neighborhood clerics, and one afternoon I join him for a gathering that could be climactic. Analysis of recorded Friday sermons shows that of the 44 mosques in Al Rashid, about nine or ten periodically spout anti-American rhetoric, with four of these inciting actual violence. One of the worst mosques—a large Sunni facility known as Mekkad al-Mokarama—looms just outside the window of the council chambers where our meeting takes place.

On the previous Wednesday, the imams of the four violence-inciting mosques were individually summoned to the local police station by Haight, presented with evidence of inflammatory rhetoric in their sermons, and informed that if this continues they could suffer serious consequences. Each was required to sign a letter stating that he understood the nature of this "last warning."

I have read transcripts of sermons from many of Baghdad's mosques. Most avoid political subjects. Many are scrupulously neutral on the fighting in Iraq. A number of them counsel patience and cooperation with the Coalition, rejoicing that "the dark and bad time of Saddam and his people is over now."

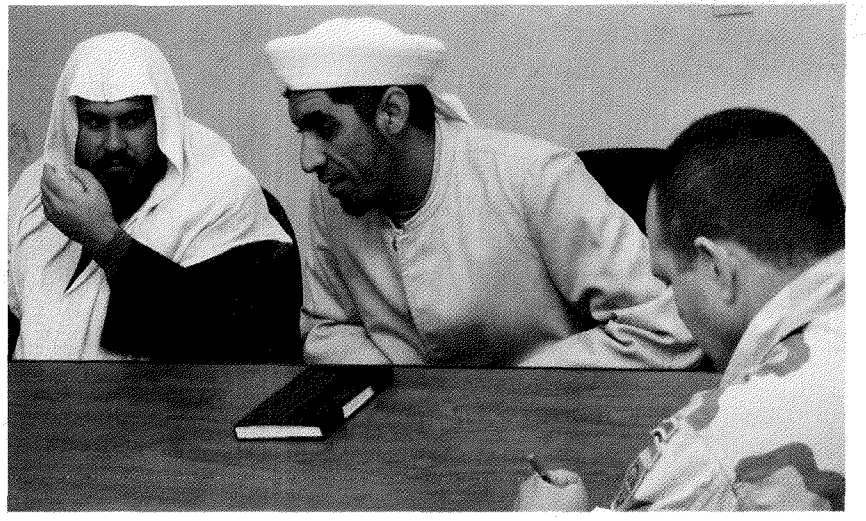
But a handful of radical imams, many of them of the Saudi Wahabi sect, spew vicious, obsessively anti-American, anti-Jewish, and anti-Christian rhetoric in sermons that mix prayer with rambling political propagandizing. A sampling of comments:

Raqueman Mosque—"Sons of monkeys and pigs came to this country under the name of civilization, technology, and freedom. They mix honey with poison to change our lives. President Bush swears in Congress that he will shave our beards and take the dresses and veils off our women. President Bush swears he will turn every woman into a whore. I ask God to change American conditions from health to sickness. I hope God will finish them, and show them dark days." (11/13/03)

Yasseen Mosque—"We will point our weapons, blood, and ourselves against the Jews and Americans." (9/5/03)

Taheed Mosque—"Please God, kill the Americans, destroy them, and make them gone from Iraq." (9/19/03)

"God kills the kafer [infidel, a synonym for Americans] and those who support them. God has mercy for and helps the mujahideen [those who attack U.S. forces]. God helps the mujahideen to take away the kafer from our land." (9/25/03)



Knuckle Rapping Sheiks Riyad and Akram are questioned by Colonel Kurt Fuller, and warned not to repeat incitements to violence in their Friday sermons.

Beneath their splendid robes and turbans, most of the imams at this meeting are not impressive. Their complaints are surprisingly trivial and peevish, built heavily on rumor, second-hand information, and fearmongering. They make vague, repetitious, and unsubstantiated charges, citing Arab TV reports often, personal experience virtually never. There is lots of onerous scapegoating, hardly any productive logic, no offer of useful analysis or practical help.

The U.S. Army officers on the other side of the table remain amazingly patient, as the conversation passes slowly through an

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Army translator. They proffer thanks. They register factual corrections. They solicit opinions. They admit their own shortcomings as military administrators and bend over backwards to be fair and placating. They calmly refute myths of raped women and defiled sanctuaries. During the course of a year, only two mosques in this densely populated region have been entered by U.S. forces. In one case, a large trove of weapons and explosives was uncovered. In the other, a junior officer forced his way into a mosque where he believed the perpetrators of a mortar attack had fled. They were not found, so Haight offered private and public apologies and paid for the door that was broken in.

At the end of the day, however, Haight remains blunt and hard-nosed. He informs these religious men that they are free to counsel their flocks and criticize the government however they like, with one exception: They may not encourage violence. Several of the clerics are friendly and conciliatory. Two scowling sheiks, though, both of whom were summoned to the official warning on Wednesday, continue to complain and posture. One (head of the problem-mosque directly across the street) challenges Haight for his opinion of his recent sermons.

"You want an honest answer? I think you are dangerous, Sheik Akram," states Haight. "Even after I spoke to you on Wednesday, you broadcast a message on Friday calling for the killing of the enemies of Islam. You know we respect religion, but what you are preaching is not religion, it is criminal activity. I am at the end of my patience." Claiming translation errors, the sheik seems stunned to learn that the remarks in question are preserved in their original on tape. "You can come see me if you'd like, and I will play you the recording."

"He has pushed me into an awful position," Haight later tells me. "I am probably going to have to arrest him later this week."

I ask another officer what kind of response could be expected if one of the imams is detained. "Three to five days of neighborhood demonstrations, perhaps some of them rough, but then things would fade. The one thing we can't risk is picking him up only to have him released soon after. That would seem to reward resistance. We have two options: Convince Iraq's Religious Ministry to revoke his position at the mosque, or collect enough strong evidence to be certain we can convict him of inciting violence in a legal trial. We've submitted transcripts and are awaiting some decisions now."

The officers involved admit afterward that meetings like this often leave them exhausted. Even the most experienced diplomat and marathon talker would be challenged to bridge the culture gaps on display in the company of these clerics. For men of action trained in the arts of war, this work can be a reach. They hide the strain, however, and manage to eke a bit of progress out of what, in less disciplined hands, could have become a useless head-butting contest.

Fortunately, Saturday's illustration of Sunni Islam at its most frustrating is not nationally representative. Only about 20 percent of Iraq's population is Sunni, and only a portion of those are under the influence of the demagogic clerics who were heavily corrupted by Saddam. The imams who guide Iraq's Shiite majority tend, on the whole, to inspire more confidence.

Sunni leaders are often virtually self-appointed, as Sunnis have no rigorous tradition of theological scholarship or vetting of religious leaders. "The imams I've worked with are unwilling to police themselves," states Colonel Kurt Fuller, commander of the roughly 4,000 82nd soldiers in southwestern Baghdad. "We've asked them to hold each other accountable, and to sanction their own radicals, but they do nothing." Shiite clergy, on the other hand, rise through a system of tutelage and hierarchy which often weeds out extremists and self-seekers. They must pursue exacting study for years to reach high-ranking positions. As a result, many are genuine intellectuals, and fewer are rabble-rousers.

In a nation where Shiites are the large majority, this provides reason to hope that Iraq might eventually develop a more responsible religious politics.

CORDON AND SEARCH

From hard to soft, and back to hard. On Sunday morning, the focus at 2nd Battalion shifts sharply from diplomacy to military counterinsurgency. In the pre-dawn dark and chill I pile into the back of a cargo humvee with ten paratroopers as "Operation Tidal Wave" kicks off. As our convoy of open trucks roars down the highway, the icy wind slices through our thin clothing, leaving most of us shivering violently and huddling together for a bit of warmth.

These soldiers have been charging across Iraq, out on operations nearly every day, for almost a full year, and their clothes show it. The crisp new desert camouflage uniforms I remember from when I was with them in early 2003 are now frayed, stained, and tattered. Helmet covers and gloves are threadbare. Even Col. Fuller wears a cap as creased and begrimed as a coal miner's Levis. These are veteran, combat-hardened soldiers.

Every time these men venture onto the roads there is a slight tension. They know the risks. In my first five days in Baghdad five IEDs detonated and five more were uncovered and defused. In addition, there have been 15 assaults on Coalition forces with rockets, grenades, mortars, or small arms (most of them ineffective).

On this moonlit night we snake into a sector not far from downtown that is nonetheless extremely rural and isolated—thanks to the abyssmal roads, thick riverside vegetation, and tribal clannishness that keep residents closed off by themselves. This is a dangerous area, site of numerous recent attacks, including the double murder of January 2. A long string of high-mobility trucks slithers down mucky country lanes bordered by tall vertical-thatch fences and rude mud-walled huts. There is a strong smell of animal dung. Dogs yap from their sleep; a rooster crows.

Suddenly the sky lights up as attack helicopters hit the three sites where recent assaults took place. F-15s thunder low overhead. All morning long they will circle and screech, serving

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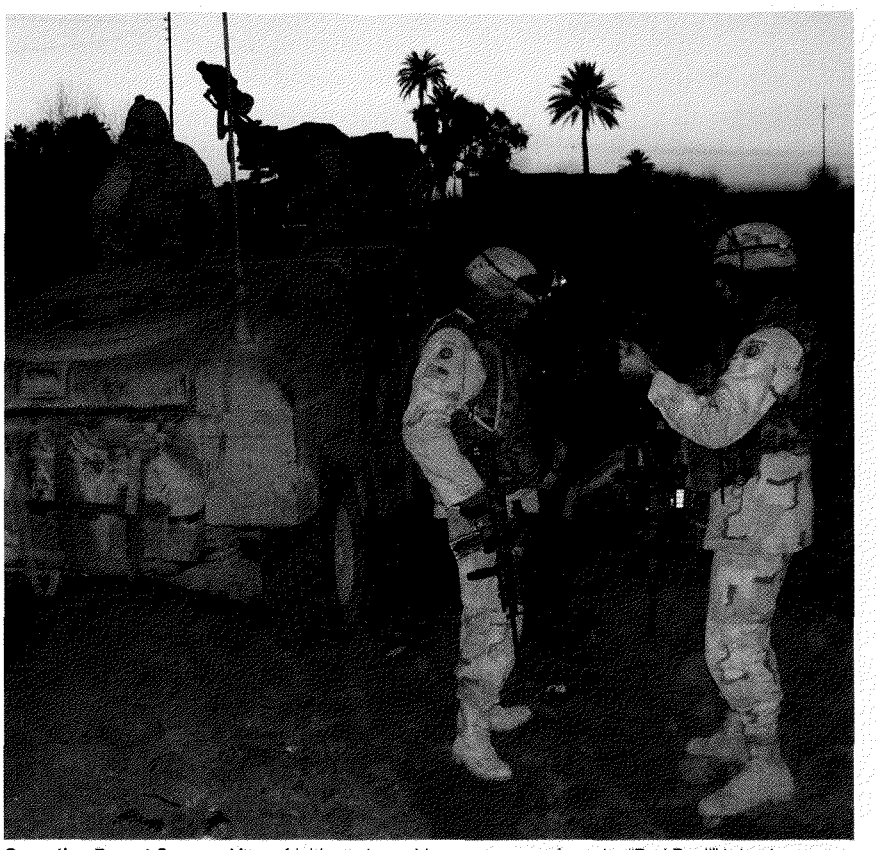
as psychological more than military weapons.

Paratroopers pour out of their trucks, spread themselves in lines across neglected fields where straggly weeds have sprouted after the winter rains, and begin to walk north. Each time a farmhouse is encountered, a handfull of soldiers circle it, bang on the door or gate, then enter and search for weapons. Each household is allowed one AK-47 and one magazine of rounds; anything more is confiscated. Some suspicious pamphlets and tattered old military publications are examined and handed to translators—are they Baath propaganda or training manuals?



Operation Desert Swarm After a frigid pre-dawn ride, paratroopers from the "Red Devil" brigade prepare to execute a series of raids and searches in the vicinity of Uwaylim.

I am patrolling with the roughly two dozen remaining members of 3rd Platoon of Bravo Company. This is the unit Seiden and Bangayan belonged to until their deaths a week and a half earlier. The men are controlled and well-behaved. There were some angry flashes the night before, as they discussed going into the place where their buddies had been slain, but this morning they are cool and professional. There is no roughness to the searching. They are solicitous to families, and unemotional with the men. They offer Arabic salutations to the women as they leave.

The domiciles are squalid. Dim mud and slapdash concrete structures containing almost no food, no furniture, and few possessions of any sort beyond a handful of cows, donkeys, and geese in each farmyard, and an occasional rattletrap vehicle. Running water is non-existent and sewer seepage trickles through consistently trash-strewn yards. Family members of all ages sleep on thin cloths stretched across the ground in a single room.

These are not people who benefited from the previous regime. It is hard to know what motivates any of them to resist the chance for a new Iraq other than intense, reactionary ignorance, perhaps religious fanaticism, and quite possibly cash payments from insurgency organizers. All over the Sunni Triangle, insurgent cells have been found to be paying poor Iraqis hundreds or thousands of dollars for planting and detonating roadside bombs or shooting rocket-propelled grenades at security forces.

This region has been trouble from the beginning. Back in October, the soldiers conducting this morning's search uncovered the largest ammunition cache found in Baghdad—a huge stash buried on the grounds of a mosque bordering the Tigris. It included 2,000 rockets, 357 landmines, 207 artillery shells, and cases and cases of small-arms ammunition, anti-aircraft rounds, and fuses. The 2nd Battalion's engineers removed some of the ordnance and destroyed the rest in place in a series of spectacular explosions that took all day and left excavations that literally rerouted the edge of the Tigris.

As the troopers proceed from house to house this morning, they also round up all the adult males, creating a long file of dark, staring eyes. Near the river, various platoons herd the men into several large groups. Military intelligence officers begin to collect their names and photograph family groupings of brothers, fathers and sons, and cousins for future reference. After many months of operating in the area these soldiers know the family webs surprisingly well. Several men are pulled out for questioning: two wanted siblings, a one-eyed old coot known to be the caretaker of Sheik Thoma's mosque, the father of a man whom farmers saw digging along the road just before the January 2 IED blast.

Then the PsyOps humvees topped with big speakers pull up and broadcast a message from Brigade Commander Fuller:

"Attention men of Karb Degla!

"Ten days ago, there was an attack on a Coalition patrol near here. This attack, and other attacks throughout the country, slow progress, hurt innocent Iraqis, and delay the withdrawal of Coalition forces from Iraq.

"This is your notice. We hold you responsible for the security situation in your area. Provide us information on those who continue their futile attacks. Help us rid your community of these cancers.

"Do not confuse our restraint today with weakness. You know our capability, and you know we can and will direct it against our enemies. Today we came as concerned friends; do not make us come back as enemies."

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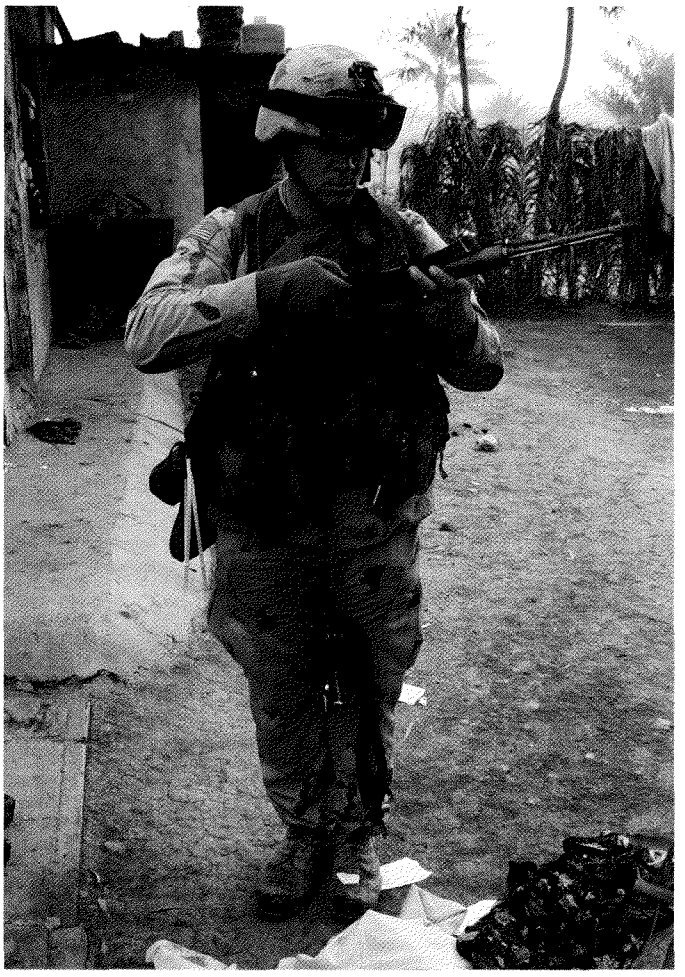

Confiscating a Kalashnikov Under American rules, every Iraqi family is allowed one military rifle and one ammunition clip. This AK-47, found wrapped in clothing under a house, was seized for exceeding the limit.

WALKING A TIGHTROPE

Shortly after receiving their warning, reinforced by leaflets given to each detainee, the frozen-faced men of Karb Degla are sent home. Lt. Col. Haight drives me a few hundred meters up the road to the site of the January 2 bombing. The crater is six feet deep. On the other side of the road there are blood stains and crushed vegetation where the blasted humvee careened down an embankment. "Those men were so perforated by shrapnel we had to lift their bodies out on ponchos," says the colonel grimly. "This was a bad, bad day I don't want repeated."

Neither does Lieutenant Andrew Blickhahn, who commands 3rd Platoon. He was in the lead vehicle of the two-truck patrol when the explosion ignited, and ran back to organize return fire and rescue of the survivors. An enlisted soldier who later attended West Point and became an officer, Blickhahn is a cool, quiet character who shows no sign of being shaken by the fact that he has been attacked in three close calls since arriving in Baghdad—twice by IEDs and once in a mortar ambush.

Around noon the lieutenant is asked to take his platoon to the nearby Baghdad sewer plant. The father of the man spotted digging at the blast site shortly before the bombing has been handed over to his men by the military intelligence officers managing the morning round-up. The old man states that his son—Mohammed Ahmed Jassim—works at the plant. In a state of advanced decay when the Coalition arrived, the treatment plant is currently in the midst of a mammoth reconstruction managed by the Bechtel Corporation. Hundreds of laborers swarm the sprawling grounds shoveling, pushing wheelbarrows, mixing concrete.

About 20 paratroopers in three trucks pull up at the plant. It occurs to me that this is a classic instance of the way American officers are required to mix hard and soft tactics in this war. On the one hand, the man who murdered two members of this platoon may be right there under their noses. Military considerations alone would call for charging in hard, seizing employment rosters, and racing to make an arrest. But this plant is more than just Jassim's workplace; it is also one of the most important projects in the rebuilding of Baghdad—a major source of local jobs and income, a vital element in improving the quality of life in the city, a centerpiece of the reconstruction effort. Inflaming the Iraqi technocrats managing the project could damage the "soft" side of the counterinsurgency effort. Cultivating them could lead, down the road, to valuable cooperation from an important civic institution.

Lt. Blickhahn walks the tightrope between military goals and social reconstruction, trying to balance each. In the end, he takes a diplomatic, unaggressive approach. Several sites are searched. All managers swear they know of no Mohammed Jassim. There is no way to tell if they are being honest. The patrol finally leaves empty-handed.

But they send home a note with Jassim's father: "Coalition forces want to speak with you. Report immediately to the authorities nearest you. We know where you live."

THE RECONSTRUCTION BUSINESS

Civic reconstruction as a tactic of counterinsurgency is not something foreign to the Army. Major Mark Stock, the 2nd Battalion's efficient executive officer, is a West Point graduate and unquestionably first and foremost a military man, but also holds a master's degree in public administration from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. Stock applies his administrative skills often in Iraq. He helped organize Iraqi contractors to quickly throw up concrete barracks where hundreds of men could live and work—"for less than what it would cost to build a good single family house in the part of New York state my wife comes from," he notes with a smile.

Stock and other officers also helped organize a lightning effort to improvise armor for the battalion's humvees. Airborne vehicles are designed to be light so they can be parachuted out of planes. When the IED threat burst onto the scene at the end of the summer, the thin fiberglass and canvas body panels of their vehicles left the 82nd's soldiers utterly unprotected.

It happens that one of the sites guarded by the division is home to Baghdad's petroleum refinery as well as its steel plant. These being crucial industrial complexes, and workplaces for thousands

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of workers, the 120 or so troopers of Bravo Company were stationed to live amongst them early last summer. By their mere armed daily presence they provide security around the clock.

So it was easy for the 82nd's officers to strike up a collaboration with the steel-plant managers on making protective plates. Through trial and error and some live-fire tests that the soldiers seem to have enjoyed conducting, the American paratroopers and Iraqi metal fabricators came up with practical homemade designs for new humvee doors, floor and roof reinforcements, and truck bedliners made from heavy sheets of rolled steel. For $24,800 the battalion's officers got the rough-and-ready designs installed on their entire vehicle fleet during October. These worked so well to protect soldiers that the rest of the Army units in Baghdad soon contracted with the plant to manufacture the impromptu armor for their vehicles as well. The whole American Army's transport fleet now looks like a scene from "The Beverly Hillbillies," but the stuff works, and the soldiers feel a lot safer.

Flexibility and inventive problem-solving are a critical part of battlefield operation, and the 82nd does them especially well. Particularly early on, when there were many pressing demands on the occupying forces, few rules, and no bureaucracy in Iraq, soldiers freelanced their way over thousands of obstacles. There was a premium on getting the job done, and one of the reasons they were able to move so fast is because operations were highly decentralized.

Major Pete Wilhelm, the director of day-to-day battle operations for the 2nd Battalion of the 325, reports, "There were lots of times when a company commander under me would get time-sensitive information, act on it, take casualties, and evacuate his casualties before I even heard about it. That's just the way we've had to operate."

This same pattern also held true on the civil-reconstruction side. Officers used CERP (the Commanders' Emergency Response Program) as an almost instantaneous tool for jump-starting Iraqi society. Employing dollars that had been seized from the old regime, the effort channeled discretionary money to battalion commanders in $250,000 chunks, and left them remarkably free to allot it according to their best judgment. In small $200-$10,000 payments these funds have been used to rehabilitate thousands of schools, to pick up garbage and connect sewer and water lines, to hire security guards and police for critical sites, to provision the meeting rooms of the new neighborhood councils.

I repeatedly ask officers I meet in Iraq whether it isn't perhaps asking too much to expect the same warriors who fought their way into Iraq to then do much of the political and sociological work of piecing the country back together. Many surprise me by saying it hasn't been an undue strain, and that the task of civil reconstruction is often closely linked to military responsibilities.

Captain Ken Burgess is a stocky, pug-nosed company commander who was heavily involved in the Army's early-summer efforts to set up the first advisory councils in every district of Baghdad. "When we first arrived we didn't know anything about the neighborhoods—not even the street names and physical boundaries, much less the disposition of the people living there. Just to be able to operate militarily, we desperately needed mechanisms where residents could talk to us and give us a pulse on what people were thinking.

"In the beginning it was tremendously subjective. Some people came to us and volunteered to help. Many we just grabbed. Any time I ran into an Iraqi who struck me as a potential leader, I would start a conversation with an eye to deciding whether that person might be a good neighborhood representative. I often had to rely on my gut instincts, and of course I wasn't always right.

New Recruits A U.S. Army Ranger trains new members of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, which will carry out much of the anti-terrorist work in the country once Iraqis are in charge.

"But soldiers actually tend to be pretty skilled at this kind of work. A huge fraction of military officers were captains of their soccer teams, scout leaders, student government officers, whatever. They understand leadership."

Still, it's not easy. Col. Kurt Fuller, as brigade commander, has

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been the martial sovereign of 1.6 million people in southwestern Baghdad over the last year. He's a grizzled, scarred, drawling Oklahoma native, and very much a straight shooter. When I press him on the extraordinary demands he and his men have faced in carrying out political and civic reconstruction, he answers: "I have been frustrated by the lengths we've had to go on this. My mission statement says I'm responsible for creating a safe and secure environment so that the Coalition Provisional Authority [CPA] and the Iraqis themselves can establish a government. I'm not trained as a diplomat, as an administrator. Yet when I go to the neighborhood meetings the CPA chairs are often empty.

"I need their advice, but I've not gotten it. The governance piece, especially, I am uncomfortable with, as are all of my commanders. Hell, I'd never even sat in on a city council meeting back home before I came here. We've had to set an awful lot in motion without much help.

"On the other hand, we're probably the only ones who can do this. We've got the manpower, the resources. We're out there on the streets. So I've just tried to apply common sense. And I guess the bottom line is that it has mostly worked. Judged in any historical sense, we're approaching a wildly successful end result. In a difficult urban environment, amidst a guerilla insurgency, we're getting a broken society working again. So I suppose that's all that matters."

RAPPING SOME RELIGIOUS KNUCKLES

In Iraq, the roles of good cop and bad cop must be filled by the same American soldiers, and today it is time for the 82nd to rap some knuckles. Two of the most inflammatory imams in southern Baghdad—Sheik Akram of the Mekkad al-Mokarama mosque, and Sheik Riyad of Abu Bakr—have been summoned to appear before Col. Fuller. Despite being called to the police station on Wednesday and read the riot act by Lt. Col. Haight, both imams repeated thinly veiled threats against Coalition forces in their latest Friday sermon. Something has got to give.

The U.S. commanders don't know exactly where the imams live, and aren't sure they will show up for today's meeting, though Iraqi Police have been dispatched to each mosque with a summons. Finally, perhaps a half hour late, they arrive. Sheik Akram wears a kind of dished turban on his head, and a floor-length cream tunic. In two long meetings where I have a chance to observe him, Akram strikes me as a deceiver, and a bit simple. His eyes shift rapidly and he often shrugs his shoulders and cracks pained satirical smiles. Sheik Riyad, chubby and dark-bearded and wearing a white shawl over his head and shoulders that always holds an exquisite little crease where it falls above his nose, is brighter but even less transparent. He is openly haughty, arrogant, and dripping with disdain.

Once again, the American commanders exhibit bottomless patience—if anything, erring on the side of being too enduring, in my judgment. They earnestly lay out American concepts of faith, toleration, and free speech. Col. Fuller has studied the Koran this summer, and he asks the two clerics to explain their understanding of what the book counsels on religious belief, Godliness, jihad, and killing. He asks them to be specific about who are "the enemies of Islam" (which they refer to ritually in their sermons). The conversation snakes its way through an Army interpreter, somewhat painfully, over a period of two and a half hours.

Fuller allows Sheik Riyad a long speech on the American deficiencies that create armed resistance in Iraq. After hearing him out, and explaining the rules under which he operates, Col. Fuller gets to the heart of the matter. "While we go to great lengths to be respectful, and avoid embarrassing people, you must understand that our actions are often a matter of life and death. I am responsible for stopping terrorists who have killed and hurt hundreds of people in this area. And I need the help of all good people in the community.

"Unfortunately we know that there are imams who support terrorists, and who actually encourage terrorist attacks. Many of the terrorists we see act on religious grounds. You must know that the freedom of speech carries with it great responsibilities. In particular, you cannot incite violence. A real holy man would never do that anyway.

"So I need to know today whether you are my ally or my enemy. I suppose you will say you are not my enemy, as you have in the past. But then in your public statements to your audience you call for death to the enemies of Islam, and violent opposition to occupiers, and so forth. What am I to do?"

Akram recognizes that this is a climactic conversation, and finally answers carefully: "Iraq is our country, but it is now occupied. We must accept the status quo. So I am going to try to avoid these subjects that have created misunderstanding."

Haight confronts him forcefully: "But you told me that on Wednesday. And then you went right out on Friday and conjured up more violence anyway. You know what? You may deny you are instigating attacks, but when you say people should attack 'infidels' and 'the enemies of Islam' they think of one thing: this uniform [tugging hard at his own sleeve]. And you both know that!"

Akram: "In my Friday prayers I asked God to 'kill the enemies of religion, wherever you find them, split them, destroy them, wherever you find them.' I did not say Americans or British."

Fuller, exploding: "I don't care who you said to kill! You cannot tell people to kill others. No holy man would do that! Where does the Koran sanction such a thing?"

Akram: "I have been doing that for 20 years. Saddam never objected to this."

Haight: "Then you've been wrong for 20 years."

Akram: "OK. I'm not going to say it from now on."

Fuller: "Yeah, and you promised that last time, then broke your word just a few days later."

Akram: "When you asked me to this meeting I consulted with my mentor at the Religious Science Organization. He counseled me to avoid words like 'enemies,' 'unbelievers,' and so forth, so I

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am going to try. I will preach only about patience, the Koran, and such. I will leave the problem alone now."

Dodging, rationalizing, and backpedaling when forced to, Akram and Riyad are skating at the brink of arrest for inciting violence. But American officers throughout Iraq are striving mightily to avoid such detainments. They are bending over backward to show respect for imams, mosques, and the Muslim religion, so as not to feed paranoia that the U.S. presence in Iraq is part of a crusade against Islam.

Col. Fuller later tells me he thought he would have to arrest the two sheiks at this meeting. In the end, though, he issues another stern warning and sends them home. Whether these men are active partisans of the resistance or just religious fanatics too zealous to care about the effects of their words on their congregations is not clear. Also unclear is whether they realize how close they are to being locked away and charged. But they will get no more free passes.

"That's it," says the colonel to his officers after they leave. "If those men cross the line again, you roll them up."

SEEDS OF DEMOCRACY

As the sun goes down on older styles of Iraqi rule, it rises over new territory. The society aspired to by a fresh group of Iraqis now stepping forward is very different from the corrupt, boss-ish, tribal oligarchy that dominated under Saddam. One can see this in the advisory councils the U.S. Army has established in neighborhoods all across the country. Today I am observing the regular meeting of the Al Rashid District Advisory Council, whose members represent about 1.6 million residents of Baghdad, and there are several stars in view. The Council's chairman is Dr. Arshad Ali Mohammed, a widely respected professor of Arabic literature at Mustanseriyah University. Nasreen Hidar Qatar is a Baghdad Kurd and a doctor who runs a local pediatric clinic. She sits on a lower neighborhood advisory council too, where I observed her in action one week previous, and she is also this sector's representative at the next governmental level up—the Baghdad City Council.

Drs. Arshad and Nasreen are intelligent, soft-spoken coalition builders who listen well, assist avidly, but don't trade in favors—embodying the outlines of a possible new era in Iraqi politics. The vice chairman of the Al Rashid council under Dr. Arshad is Khadija Rissan Nama, an agricultural engineer and a woman. In the beginning, U.S. soldiers had to scrap hard to get women on the councils at all, but this fall her fellow councilors actually elected Ms. Khadija into the No. 2 spot on this body. Other members of the Rashid council include a driver, a radiologist, a lawyer, a phone operator, a veterinarian, an ayatollah, a shop owner, a student. Many of them work under death threats; some have been physically attacked. In September, Dr. Akila al-Hashimi, a member of the national Iraqi Governing Council who lived in Al Rashid, was assassinated as she stepped out of her home.

At today's meeting, a colonel from the newly organized Iraqi Police talks about security issues. He is a career police officer who has earned the trust of American commanders. The discussion centers around ways to improve the public image and legitimacy of the Iraqi Police, and reduce crime in the city. The street crime rate here is not nearly so bad as media reports would have you believe, however. American Enterprise Institute scholar John Lott calculated in late December 2003 that, despite the war-related disruptions and the fact that Saddam released all of Iraq's common criminals a few days before Americans entered his country, the murder rate in Baghdad is now lower than in most of the major cities of Europe and America.

Meeting of the Minds Colonel Fuller mulls how to handle religious extremists with Lieutenant Colonel Dave Haight (back to camera).

Though this council was appointed, not elected, a good deal of thought has gone into a system which continually refines the representative nature of this body and others like it, gradually edging the country toward full democracy. Just in the half year since its establishment, this council has been "refreshed" twice. The Army has established a mechanism that periodically pushes four members off the council via a vote of the members. This gives the councilors a chance to purge corrupt or obstructionist peers. And it provides the community with a regular opportunity to inject new blood into the body. A town hall forum is held (400 people came to the last one in the Bayaa sub-district), and the citizens present elect replacements for the removed members. This represents the debut of democratic process in Baghdad.

This process allows some openings for extremist candidates, if

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they can pack the town hall with their supporters. But so far most of the individuals brought in this way have been responsible. And even the radicals are probably less threatening inside the system, Army officers reason, than they would be agitating from without.

Among the 32 members of this District Advisory Council (representing about a quarter of Baghdad), there are, however, just three or four Sunnis. In a city where they make up the largest single chunk of the population, that is a problem. But it is a problem created by uncooperative Sunnis themselves, and its solution is mostly on their shoulders. Some fashion of a dramatically different Iraq is coming; the only question is whether the Sunnis are going to help define it, or get left behind.

Democratic Iraqis Two members of the Dawrah Advisory Council discuss rehabilitation of a former palace that is to become a district social center. Dr. Nasreen Hidar Qatar, left, a physician and Kurd, also represents hundreds of thousands of her neighbors on the Baghdad City Council.

FOLLOWING THE INFANTRY

After two weeks in Baghdad, I'm now in a Black Hawk bound for the Fallujah region—pretty much Ground Zero for the Iraqi resistance since April. Helicopters shot down in these environs have yielded some of the worst single-day losses of life in the war. Helos now fly only at night in this region, and they maneuver evasively, in total blackout, to make themselves difficult targets. Airplanes leaving Baghdad International take their own countermeasures—they fly tight corkscrews as close to straight up as their engines will carry them, not straying from the immediate vicinity of the airfield until they've risen high above the clouds.

As soon as our chopper lifts off we begin to bank, and dip, and zig, and zag. It's a clear night and we are flying low, so the swooping curves allow good views of Baghdad out of the large Lexan windows on either side of the bird. After about a half hour of this aerial juking, amidst the turbine roar and the percussive overhead pounding of blades on air, we suddenly drop to the ground. It is pitch black outside; dust is whirling. The co-pilot yanks open the side door. I quickly scrawl "St. Mere?" (the name of my landing zone) on a pad of paper, and shine my LED pin light on it. The pilot nods his helmeted head. I grab my pack and step out into black ink.

I can see nothing. Then perhaps a cigarette, some glow, off at one corner of the LZ. I walk gingerly toward the spot, unable to pick out anything in my surroundings. There I find a kindly lieutenant in a humvee. I was supposed to be met by someone able to take me to the next battalion I am visiting, but no one has come. Army contingency 101: the crossed signal. "Don't worry, I'll bring you back to the brigade base with me," he says, "because this is just an air strip, and once we leave there's no one here." I nod my head gratefully.

Arriving unannounced at the 82nd's 3rd Brigade headquarters I fall into the hands of the Public Affairs Office. With a bit of a sinking feeling I roll out my sleeping bag and crash for the night. Sure enough, the next morning I'm snared in a little spider web of Army bureaucracy. Permission needed; this is classified; you can't go there; that takes time; I'll seek approval; blah blah blah.

I need to get out of this planning and supply terminal and into the field with some infantrymen. I press hard on each of the three people in the PAO office. Luckily a couple of officers I'd crossed paths with during the war last spring come over, some carrying copies of my book about our experiences for me to sign. The sergeant who controls my fate relaxes a little. And he sees that I'm going to pester him to death if he doesn't ship me over to the action quickly, so we agree on a busy schedule for the next few days and start to enjoy each other. Turns out to be a sweet guy.

GETTING IRAQ BACK IN BUSINESS

Fallujah is a city of nearly 400,000 souls with more Saddam partisans per capita than just about any other place in Iraq. A considerable number of the electricity towers crossing the surrounding desert have been sabotaged. Remnants of high-voltage cables hang loosely off each side of every tower, like sagging arms—neatly clipped off about seven feet above the ground, as high as a looter stripping the steel and copper wire can reach with his snips. They remind me of trees at home in the Adirondack mountains which have all been trimmed to a similarly precise height—the level that a winter-starved deer standing on snow can reach as it cranes for buds and other forage.

I'm in an armored convoy headed for a vast acreage that is home to two cement factories, a brick production line, and a tile plant—one of the main industrial sites in greater Fallujah. When the U.S. Army first arrived, this hulking but broken-down facility employed only 200 workers, turning out dribs and drabs of product. After a little tinkering it now provides jobs to 750 workers, but still operates only in fits and starts. If it were up and running at full production it could employ 2,200 people in a city desperate for salaries.

One main problem is shortage of electricity. At full bore, the complex would require up to 16 megawatts of power; it currently gets 1 megawatt, and occasionally loses its juice altogether. The Army began to supply generators, but discovered that the large units needed would consume lakes of diesel fuel that are simply not available in this war zone.

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On the Beat In certain parts of the Sunni Triangle, soldiers patrol city streets that can be friendly one moment, then turn deadly at the next corner.

The other pressing problem at the cement plant is miserable maintenance and a lack of spare parts. The machinery in the various buildings is in tatters from years of neglect. The Iraqi engineer leading us through the factory explains that they have adequate cash flow to buy parts and replacement equipment, but need permission from the minerals ministry for every transaction, which is a constant chokepoint.

An Eastern European now working for the Coalition Provisional Authority tells me that Iraqi heavy industry under Saddam was very similar to command-and-control communism at its worst. "Eeet's oonbeleefable!" he fulminates, "zey can't do anyseng vid out approoval." By the time the Berlin Wall fell, the economies of Eastern Europe had already evolved somewhat toward more freedom and flexibility, he notes, so the demands of a market economy were not wholly unknown. But right up to this spring, Iraq's large industries were still operated by commissars stamping make-believe five-year plans.

This interesting tour (led by locally based U.S. Army officers who have been working with Iraqi managers to assess the plants and get them functioning again) includes a high-level CPA delegation surveying the economic potential of the area. Members include Jacek Kwasniewski (a Pole who directed much of his country's privatization of industry after the fall of communism, now planning Iraq's private sector development for the CPA); a very sharp mechanical engineer and colonel in the Romanian army who is one of the CPA's experts on state-owned industry; technical people from the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development; and several U.S. Army officers assigned to the CPA.

The team is led by an energetic military officer—Colonel (soon to be General) Mike Oates, who, as the new whipcracker for the CPA's chief operating officer, Keith Kellogg, is charged with getting Iraq's gears turning. "You know, of the $18 billion the U.S. is going to be investing in Iraq this next year or two, $12 billion is going into construction. That means cement and bricks. So there's a large potential market for what these folks make," he states. Through an interpreter he questions one of the plant's engineers and learns that the facility could turn out 1,000 tons of Portland cement per day at peak capacity. That's a lot of foundations and walls.

"But before we get excited and start pushing resources into a place like this we need to figure out how many jobs would be produced for any investment made. It's possible we could be better off spending our dollars at a bunch of smaller projects elsewhere."

Spoken like a good businessman. But in this case by a man wearing a helmet, desert fatigues, and a 9mm pistol instead of a three-piece suit.

Next I have a conversation with Kwasniewski, whose intelligence and economic acumen impress me. He is not only a Ph.D. economist and ex-government minister who was a primary engineer of Poland's shift toward capitalism, but later founded one of the most successful investment banks in Poland. His firm orchestrated $6 billion in transactions from 1996 to 2002, including the privatization of the Gdansk shipyard.

"From the beginning I wholeheartedly supported the effort to free Iraq. Then I was asked to join the CPA as a Polish representative, to work particularly on the privatization of Iraq's state-owned industries. The technical part was not hard. But privatization is only one quarter technical; the main obstacle is garnering enough political support to push through the necessary alterations. This fall the privatization effort in Iraq died, at least for the moment, because we failed to earn the support of the Iraqi Governing Council.

"But, you know, that's not such a big problem—because Iraq never had a lot of state-owned industries. Outside of oil, only 5-7 percent of Iraqis worked for state companies. The vast bulk of the

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country's employment and non-oil GDP is in the private sector. So privatization isn't essential. What *is* essential is helping Iraq's small private businesses grow. The entrepreneurial spirit and energy in this country is enormous; businessmen just need better conditions and standards: credit standards, labor standards, legal certainties, an environment that encourages private business. And Iraq desperately needs investment—which will pour in quickly once a decent set of rules is in place.

"Established businesses in this country carried an awful dead weight during Saddam's rule. All major firms had to give 10 percent of their revenues each year to the president and his cronies, and they had to accept the installation of Saddam's friends and family members into their offices, drawing large salaries, setting policies, interfering in many ways.

"Of course private business will survive anything; it can never be stamped out. But great damage was done to Iraqi enterprise. I am hopeful Iraqi emigres might help cure that. Many have become successful businesspeople in the West. As some of them return, they will bring not just money but something much more important: Western ideas of business and management."

As we were leaving the cement plant, a threadbare Iraqi walked up and handed me something rather precious in the middle of this barren desert: a large orange aster blossom, plucked from some unseen corner of this industrial ruin where a hardy plant must have survived from the more prosperous pre-Saddam past.

Who says Iraqis didn't greet Americans with flowers? I got one. Even in Fallujah.

A MILITARY INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

Saturday had given me a good look at the problems and possibilities of Iraq's mercantile sector. On Sunday the CPA team and I burrowed deeply into an even more troublesome part of the country's economy: Saddam Hussein's military-industrial complex—in its full Stalinist squalor.

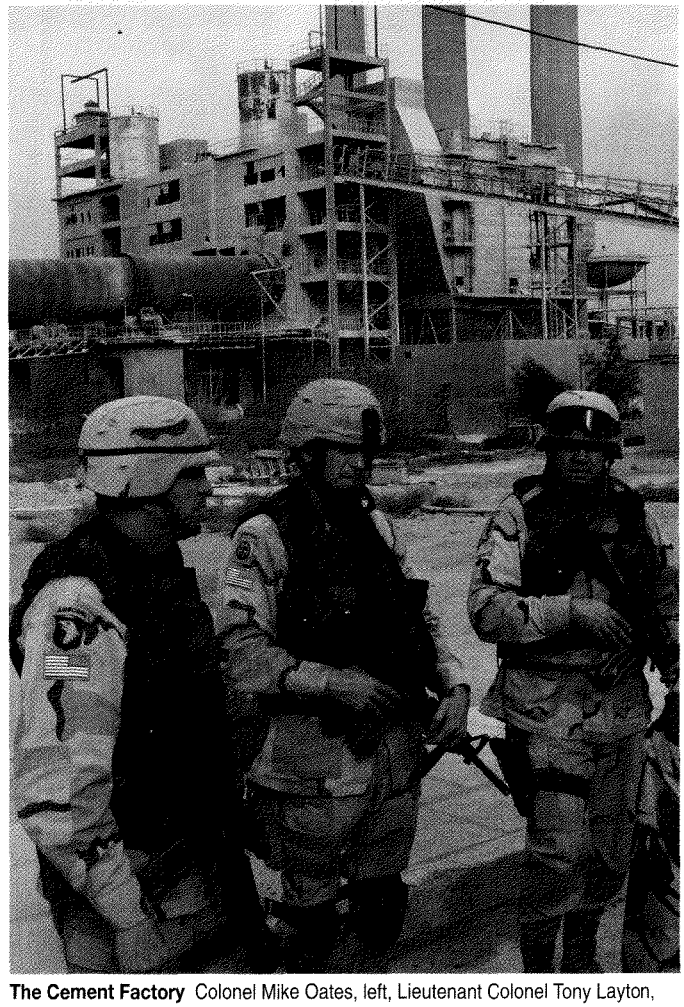
Our full-day trip took us to an artillery design and manufacturing center, an optical-sight factory, a plant for making shell casings, and other facilities for producing war materiel. These were clustered in a series of huge compounds out in the desert, in the middle of nowhere. To get there we would pass through the middle of Fallujah.

Ambushes are frequent and fierce in Fallujah, so any trip into the city requires serious combat preparation and contingency planning. With a large group of M.P.s in gun trucks as escort, we are travelling in force today—a convoy of seven humvees, most of them armored, and about 35 men in all. To keep some distance from dangerous roadside bombs the drivers straddle the line down the middle of the highway, pulling into their own lane only at the last second when oncoming traffic necessitates.

A longtime citadel of the Baath Party and the Iraqi military, Fallujah is definitely more sullen than Baghdad. Stony faces stare as we roll through garbage-filled streets as squalid as any I have seen on five continents. The oft-attacked U.S. soldiers operating in this harsh city seem to have been hardened by their environment. They are cold, a little numb, rarely waving to the children who give them a thumbs-up. On buildings along the main street I see the only anti-American graffiti I've noticed in Iraq. One traffic circle we enter is positively ringed with ugly IED craters; the sergeant hollers to the gunner protruding from our roof hatch to crouch down into the truck while we pass through it.

Back out in the desert we pass one of the largest storage points in Iraq for seized ammunition. "Keep in mind that Iraq actually possessed more conventional ammunition than the entire U.S. military," says Col. Oates. "There were originally something like 6,000 ammo dumps in this country."

Army specialists are sorting huge quantities of everything from bullets to ballistic missiles—destroying large stocks every day, and recycling the rest for future supply of the new Iraqi army. Maj. Gen. Swannack notes that "some of the caches we're dealing with are miles long and wide, containing thousands of tons of ammunition. To assist us in the reduction process we've hired over 50 local Anbar truckers and employed over 700 Iraqis—making the province safer for all of us." By the new year, over 22,000 tons of ammo had been detonated in Anbar alone.



The Cement Factory Colonel Mike Oates, left, Lieutenant Colonel Tony Layton, center, and a civil affairs officer tour an industrial site where the U.S. Army hopes to get vitally needed jobs and production back on line.

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At last we roll up to today's first destination: a massive artillery-tube fabricating facility. It seems the Iraqis acquired specimens of the top howitzers from China, the U.S., Russia, and other places, tore them down, then reverse-engineered hybrid weapons combining the best features. "They produced some excellent cannons this way," reports the U.S. artilleryman leading us through. Their research and testing program was run in the first building we enter—one of a series of football-field-sized industrial caverns we will pass through this day, many of them filled with enormous presses and milling machines and 20-ton lifting cranes. This is extraordinarily expensive equipment, European mostly, generally 1990s and 1980s vintage. A company of soldiers from the 82nd Airborne's 3rd Brigade lives on the premises to prevent looting, but it is obvious that everything has been neglected for some years, and disorder rules.

Commuting in Fallujah In a city where traveling in force is the only way to avoid fatal attacks, an armored humvee can provide some protection.

Small knots of workers still show up every day, mostly standing around doing nothing or working fitfully on maintenance and piddling fabrications. They are here because this state-owned enterprise continues to make small assistance payments to them. (The funds come from the overarching Iraqi ministry, operating under CPA oversight.) They also show up because 3,000 families who have depended directly on this factory for their living are nursing hopes that some sort of production will resume here in the future.

There are messy heaps in all the yards, much broken equipment, a shortage of spare parts, many problems with power and supplies. But there remain enough machines, raw materials, and skilled workers here to turn out goods. This is still one of Iraq's preeminent industrial facilities. The problem is that the one product they specialized in—howitzer barrels—can no longer be produced in a de-militarized Iraq.

There are civilian products (like hydraulic cylinders) which use similar production techniques. But the management is paralyzed by the idea of selling to an open market. As we walk the factory floor with the director and several engineers and supervisors it's clear that while technically competent they are utterly cowed and baffled as to how they should operate in the post-Saddam era.

Urged repeatedly by the visiting CPA officials to go find customers they can manufacture products for, they answer over and over, "I don't have permission for that. How would I get approval from the Military Industrial Commission?"

One of the Eastern European advisors splutters: "Forget permission! If you have a customer, just make an agreement."

"I have gone to the oil ministry, the ministries producing steel, glass, to see if we can do work for them," answers a manager. "They tell me, 'Oh, you are under the Ministry of Military Industry. We cannot work with you.'"

"You should look for contracts outside of the government," suggests one CPA official.

"What if somebody comes along in two months and criticizes me, saying 'Who allowed you to do such a thing?'" At this point even the Eastern Europeans begin shaking their heads.

More specific reservations are addressed to one of the 82nd's officers who is laboring to get this facility operating again: "I need some rules. Where must the money go if I sell something? How much do I reinvest into the company? How much for profit sharing to the employees?"

"For now, you just need to pay your workers, make repairs, and pay for your materials," answers the soldier. "Then put the rest in the bank. We'll take the next step somewhere down the road. The important thing is to start producing. And you must have open books, so we can check all expenses and payments."

One looming conflict for the managers is the temptation to sell off valuable machinery. This could line some pockets quickly, but it would cripple the plant's ability to produce in the future. A few large 1990s-era Swiss fabricating implements are sitting at curbside near the factory entrance when we arrive. "Those weren't here when we came last week," warns one lieutenant colonel. "Probably some managers profiteering right under our noses, maybe with the complicity of the ministry. We've gotta watch this or they'll strip the whole place out."

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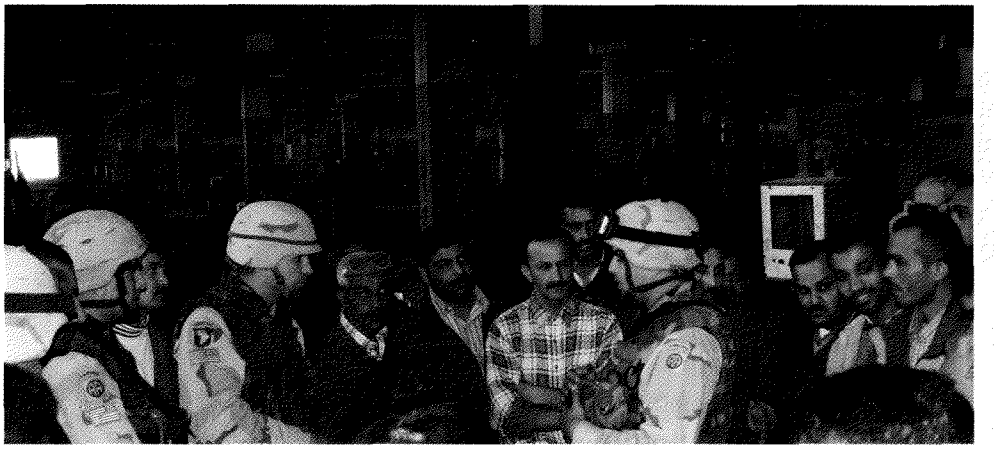

The Artillery Factory Through an interpreter, Colonel Oates promises skilled Iraqi machinists in an idled defense plant that he will do his best to find them work, and that they should "have hope."

Just before we leave the artillery plant, Col. Oates gathers a circle of several dozen workers around him and, with an Army interpreter, tells them he will return in a week or two with a team of technical experts. They'll analyze some of the civilian uses to which the manufactory might best be redirected. "We will help you get working again," he says, as the Iraqi workers crane to see his face. "Have hope."

GRUNT'S EYE VIEW

This morning I'm picked up bright and early by the men of 1st Battalion of the 82nd's 504th Regiment—the "Red Devils." I'm back with the infantry. In the words of my transport crew, the transition from the brigade headquarters to their Camp Mercury is like "heading off to the redneck stepchild's house." I actually find it a comfortingly familiar layout of a few concrete buildings, lots of gravel, a bank of porta-johns, some noisy generators, and tents.

To help patrol the roads for IEDs and lend some heavy firepower to certain operations, there is a detachment of armor here out of Fort Riley, Kansas—always a bit of an oddity for paratroopers (the tanks, that is, not Kansas). Off in another corner is the "Red Devil Roof Inn," the concertina-wire-ringed detention tents where the two companies operating from this location can hold prisoners for up to 72 hours. Hundreds of Iraqis have been processed through this facility since the battalion arrived during the summer. About a quarter typically get released after a few days; the rest are sent to the brigade level for further interrogation. From there the most hard-core go to nearby Abu Ghuraib prison, the country's principal lockup, which sits about an hour west of Baghdad and currently hosts about 6,500 guests of the U.S. government.

At that level the Coalition considers the prison "full," though Saddam, less fastidious about humanitarian issues, reportedly packed 40,000 enemies of his state into the main lockup—40 or 50 to a cell. He also carried out many executions at Abu Ghuraib. In the fittingly gloomy light of dusk I visited the death chamber, where prisoners were hanged two at a time, then cut down to fall into a pit where their bodies were burned. Uday and Qusay Hussein would often preside over the executions, the M.P.s now running the prison have learned, and liked to operate the gallows themselves, sometimes even entering the holding cells to simply shoot prisoners when the executions fell behind schedule.

One company of 504 soldiers are long-term residents at Abu Ghuraib themselves—they secure the region surrounding the prison. Just one week before I visited, President Bush released 500 of Abu Ghuraib's "least dangerous" prisoners as a gesture of good will. Apparently these prisoners weren't *non*-dangerous, though. Soldiers told me that the amnesty brought an immediate spike in mortar attacks on the prison, as the parolees apparently offered up information on the facility's layout, or launched attacks themselves. The soldiers' own quarters took numerous hits, pulverizing the roof tiles, but fortunately not penetrating the heavy concrete over their living area.

The brain trust of the 1-504 gathers every evening for a Battle Update Brief which summarizes events of the last 24 hours and lays plans for the future. These require "Secret" security clearance, but here, as in many of my other travels with the 82nd, the battalion commander accords me the privilege of sitting in. This night's proceedings provide clear evidence that there is still much fighting to be done in this country. Just within the last day, this area experienced a mortar attack, two IED incidents, and explosions thought to be 122mm rockets that were launched from nine miles away.

How is it known where the rockets came from? Courtesy of the powerful new Q36 and Q37 radar systems, which lay down a thick blanket of radar extending for many miles in every direction. Any time something flies upward through this blanket and comes down somewhere else, the system captures the entry and exit points and the land impact point, calculates the trajectory backwards, and almost instantly yields the coordinates of the launch site.

A response can be dispatched with a single radio call. Should soldiers be patrolling near the firing point they will chase the shooters down. Otherwise, the coordinates are sent to U.S. counterfire batteries—either a mortar or artillery team kept on station at all times. Within minutes, they rain fire down on the Iraqi attackers. That takes all the fun out of launching an assault on an American position.

The Iraqis have figured out ways to reduce their chances of getting punished, however. They shoot and scoot—popping off a handful of rounds, sometimes right from the back of a truck, and then hightail it out of there. Other times they'll launch from an area where they know American decency will protect

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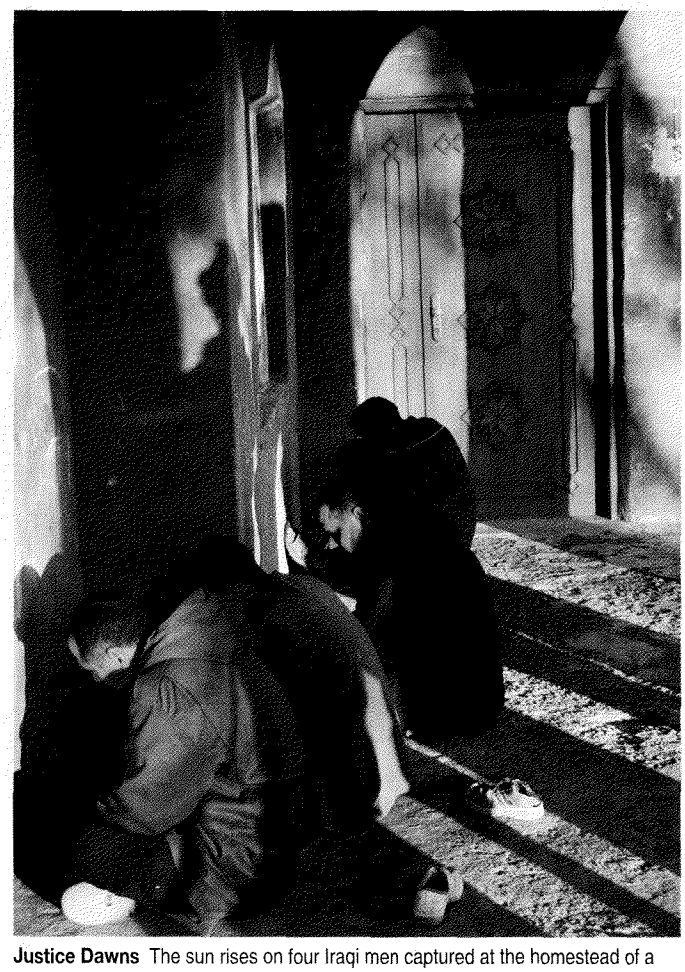
them—amidst a residential neighborhood, or next to a busy highway. Before the counterfire batteries are let loose U.S. soldiers check their maps to see what's located at the coordinates given to them by the Q36. If there's a significant chance of hurting innocent people, the shelling is cancelled.

Insurgent rockets can be particularly hard to respond to. For one thing they can be launched from further away than a mortar. And because they fly horizontally rather than looping steeply upward and then down like a mortar, they sometimes evade radar detection. Of course, rockets require careful aiming, and the improvised launching systems the Iraqis have had to resort to have not been very precise. They are improving, though.

"These latest rockets landed just outside the walls of our camp," warns battalion commander Marshall Hagen. "I want you to watch out. These guys know what they're doing."

A SNEAKY TERROR FIGHT

The battalion intelligence officer's summary of the latest classified information also makes it clear that there remain plenty of threats in or on their way to this theater. Intercepted information reveals that al-Qaeda is trying to orchestrate large-scale car-bomb attacks against Coalition forces and Iraqi targets over the next month. Various operatives of a cell believed to be working out of Mosul have been overheard discussing the purchase of 40 vehicles in an adjoining country for conversion into car bombs. (A string of violent car-bomb blasts do indeed take place in the weeks after this warning goes out.)



Justice Dawns The sun rises on four Iraqi men captured at the homestead of a former officer in Saddam's presidential protection force.

We also learn that terrorists are moving more sophisticated surface-to-air missiles near Baghdad International Airport. They would like to down a plane and so discourage Royal Jordanian Airlines from resuming commercial flights to the airport, as is being considered.

There is discussion of a grenade attack a few days ago on the local city council meeting, which injured some members. One of them was a woman who had criticized the Americans for detaining local Iraqis. She stopped complaining after that, reports an officer.

Lieutenant Colonel Hagen is informed that one of the Iraqi interpreters employed at this camp has been discovered to be working for, and possibly related to, an important wanted insurgent. The translator is going to be arrested tomorrow. Hagen then reminds his officers to avoid divulging information on tactics to interpreters, not to tell them where a raiding mission is headed until they are on their way in the vehicle, and to keep an ear cocked for hints of false translations or other duplicity.

In general, the many Iraqi interpreters now working for the Coalition have been trustworthy and effective—a great many have even become important sources of intelligence, cultural information, and character assessment on detainees. Many of these interpreters are college students, women, ethnic minorities, or others estranged from the previous regime, and they often show their pleasure that Iraq is entering a new course. But any single spy could do damage, so care is exercised in how they are employed. The same precautions are observed when Iraqi police or Iraqi Civil Defense Corp soldiers are brought in on an operation. Destinations are withheld until the last moment, and outside communication is cut off in the period between combat briefings and the commencement of action.

In a sneaky guerilla war there can be no complacency. Despite the many threats they face, though, the officers are remarkably calm, intrepid, often even cheerful. Lt. Col. Hagen runs a brisk meeting, interjecting pointed remarks and questions, firing off queries and instructions, striding through reports from the field like he strides across the plains of central Iraq during a mission—with the long, rapid gait of a lean and rangy 6'4" athlete.

Amidst an operation, Hagen likes to roam quickly from point to point to stay right on top of the action, and he is as quiet as he is speedy. As I follow him around for two days I find I need to watch closely, else he will have slipped off to observe some new thing while I've been taking pictures or listening in on an interrogation. Fortunately we are a threesome—the commander who will be leading the Marines when they take over this sector in less than three months is visiting this week, so I have two human landmarks to navigate off of as we glide among soldiers and vehicles, through the farmhouses and

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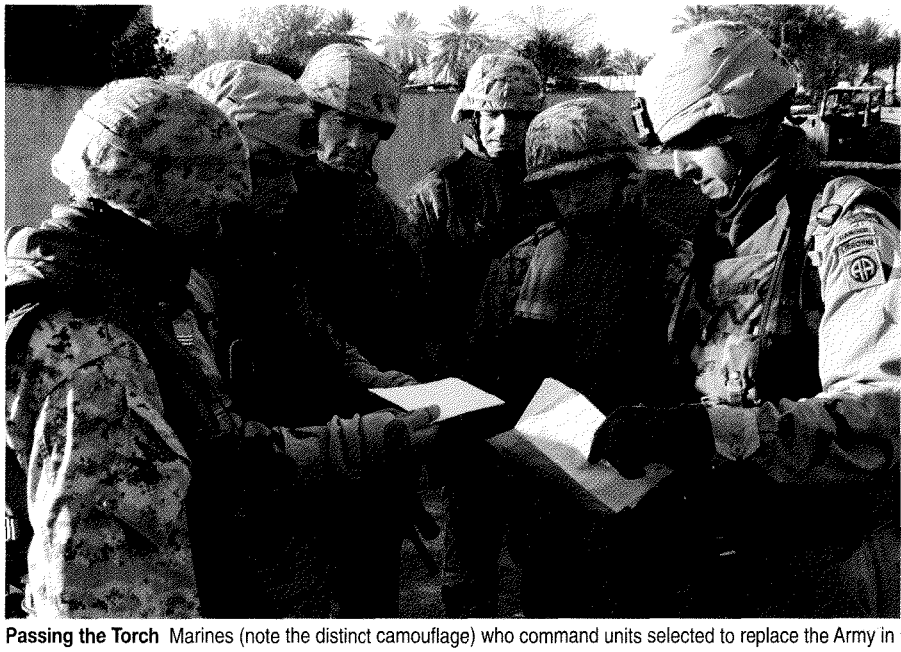
sheep and goats and scrub palms of rural Iraq.

It's a small world. The incoming Marine commander, Lieutenant Colonel Brennan Byrne, turns out to be a subscriber to *The American Enterprise*. Byrne is a naturally buoyant redhead, and has arrived here full of energy, confidence, and enthusiasm. He reports that his 1st Division grunts, who did heavy fighting in Iraq during the war last year before rotating out, are itchy to come back and do their part in pushing the country further down the road toward peace and stability.

Like his boss, Marine General James Mattis, Byrne plans to put great emphasis on earning the good will of everyday Iraqis. He smiles and waves at villagers and lights up the faces of local kids by showing them digital photos he's snapped. One of the reasons for rotating troops is to bring in fresh ideas and renewed eagerness, so



Passing the Torch Marines (note the distinct camouflage) who command units selected to replace the Army in March are briefed by two of their Army counterparts on aspects of the local insurgency.

Byrne's zest will come in handy.

He's got his work cut out for him, though. At one farmhouse a knot of young children happily receive his handshakes and a new soccer ball. But I notice as we leave that right in front of that same house there are three craters left by roadside bombs directed at Americans. It would be nearly impossible to plant a bomb there without the knowledge of the family we've just been smiling with.

And I remember that not long ago some soldiers in this battalion had a grenade thrown at them by an Iraqi boy very much like those who received this morning's gifts. The perpetrator was nine years old.

NEW BLOOD

When I left for this latest visit to Iraq at the beginning of 2004, the American press was full of pessimistic speculation about what would happen when, over a period of about 90 days, nearly all of the combat-hardened troops in the country were pulled out and replacements brought in. I was a little concerned myself about the loss of institutional memory and street savvy that could result. But watching the actual transition take place in Baghdad and the Sunni Triangle around Fallujah made me relax.

For one thing, contrary to some alarmist reporting about clueless, pot-bellied National Guard units taking over, most of the troops being brought in are not newbies. In fact, many of those being inserted into the toughest locales are themselves very recent combat veterans. The brigade of the 82nd Airborne rotating out of Baghdad was replaced by another brigade of the 82nd that had only recently returned from service under fire in Afghanistan. There are certainly important things the newcomers will need to learn about their neighborhood, but they're already quite familiar with Islamic culture, and experienced in terror war amidst a civilian population.

Likewise with the 1st Marine Division moving into the Fallujah area. This is the same unit that fought its way through the country in the war of 2003, then went home at the end of the spring. For a large majority of the officers and grunts, this will be their second Iraq tour in less than two years, so the learning curve will be short.

A second reason not to worry about the new troops is that the handoffs are being done in a very thorough way. The replacement commanders arrive in the country and start picking the brains of their predecessors weeks and months before they assume responsibility. Their subordinate officers also come over and meet their counterparts, get briefed on who's who in each neighborhood, watch the sifting of intelligence, and sit in active war councils. The Army has conducted "left seat, right seat" operations, where the outgoing and incoming peers ride together during operations, then eventually physically switch seats as the command authority transfers. A considerable amount of nitty-gritty operational detail changes hands in the process.

This is vastly more than the troops now finishing up in Iraq were given when they arrived. "At my handoff in August of 2003, I got nothing but a 'See ya!,' quite literally," says battalion commander Hagen. "I arrived, and five days later they were gone." The first relief troops had to make everything up as they went along. Platoon commander Andrew Blickhahn of the 325, for instance, explains that "we weren't very good at intelligence when we first got here. But we've gotten quite good. And most of the lessons we've learned will now transfer easily."

When new units arrive, voluminous briefing books, maps, operating procedures, patrol routes—you name it—are handed over intact. A set of fully functioning bases is also passed off, where vital preparations like security walls, food services, and blast-resistant barracks have mostly been completed. It's also an

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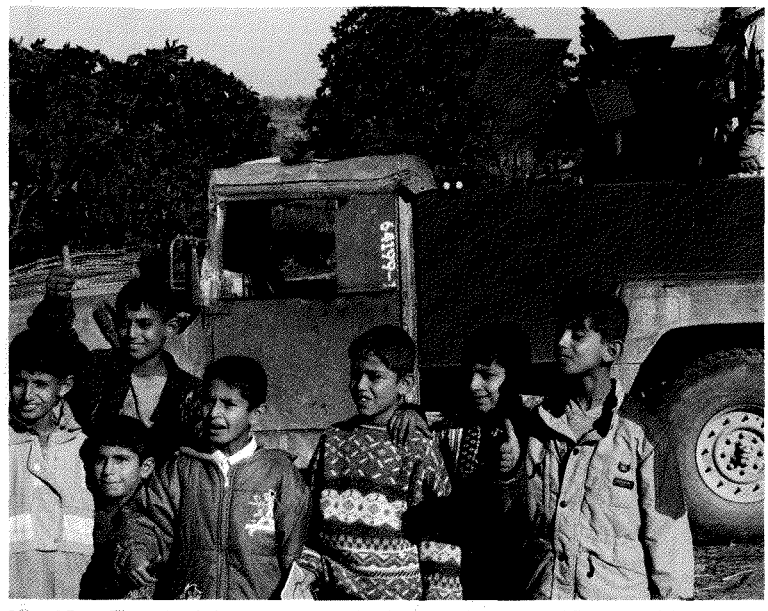

Mixed Bag These Iraqi children were delighted with the American soldiers who visited their farmstead. But some older brother or other relative may feel differently: immediately in front of their home the road was pocked by three ugly IED craters.

enormous advantage that the local advisory councils, the Iraqi Police, the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, and other institutions have already been (arduously) put together, and are now beginning to operate with some momentum. All this can be inherited.

A third reason not to fear troop changeovers is that after a year, a fresh set of eyeballs and a reinvigorated level of enthusiasm are often very useful. "I would estimate that our combat effectiveness peaked after our sixth month," says Lieutenant Michael Eitelman of the Baghdad-based 325. "After a while you get tired, and worn down a little bit psychologically. You get accustomed to your surroundings. You let your guard down. You stop thinking of new ideas." The fresh energy and problem-solving perspectives of the replacement troops can be expected to counterbalance most of their freshman mistakes.

KEEPING THE BALANCE

As they prepared during the winter to leave for their March Iraq mission, some of the incoming Marine officers made splashy statements to the press about how differently they were going to do things compared to U.S. Army practices. They promised a softer, friendlier approach that they suggested would win more Iraqi cooperation. They talked about leaving their helmets and body armor off to present a gentler face, and considered a different color of combat fatigues so the Iraqis would know the U.S. Army was gone and a new group was in control. The Army, having slogged pretty impressively through a difficult year, took this as an implicit criticism—and it was not much appreciated.

There is no question that efforts to woo neutral Iraqis are critical to pacifying the country, and it is wise for the Marines to head into their job making that a priority. Under the strain of daily attacks, it's understandable that America's fighting Joes might become suspicious and curt with Iraqis, so it's useful to continually remind them that everyday citizens must be treated differently than the splinter groups who are on the attack. Otherwise, Iraq's potentially sensible middle could end up disinclined to cooperate with American efforts.

For that very reason, the U.S. Army has carried out elaborate community work in Iraq and extended great effort to cultivate local allies and speed the resuscitation of Iraqi society. Yet caution and good sense are needed. "It's great to be nice. But we've found that if you let up for one second against the bad guys, they're right back at your throat," warns Lieutenant Colonel Brian Drinkwine.

As one Army officer says, "Shaking hands and handing out presents is easy until about the third IED tears up your men. Then you shift to the position we're in now: wanting to make friends, but not having any illusion that the missing element is warmth on our side. The reality is that there is a hard-core minority here who cannot be won over by any reasonable effort, they can only be incapacitated. Until then I could never encourage my soldiers to let down their guard."

Moreover, there is a time and a place for everything. In vast swaths of Iraq, the population is predominantly friendly or neutral to the Coalition forces that have changed their government. And in many of these places, soldiers do indeed appear without body armor, and present a more relaxed public face. But in severely recalcitrant towns like Fallujah, passing out candy can be more than fruitless: It can be deadly. American naivete sometimes assumes that all other people operate in good faith, just as we try to. But there are deeply irrational, blood-feuding groups that simply will not meet a negotiator halfway. There are regimes and cultures that must be broken and forcibly modified: Japanese feudalism, Nazism, the Cosa Nostra, Latin American oligarchies, drug lords, Islamic fundamentalists, other extremists.

For most parts of Iraq, and the vast proportion of Iraqis, the kinder and gentler approach is surely the correct one. But in a few dark holes, the necessary prescription is hard warfare: destruction or detention of the enemy and those who shelter the enemy. Having traveled across much of Iraq I see the need for both styles of policing.

Army General David Petraeus of the 101st Airborne actually put into place a regimen almost exactly like what the Marines are now proposing for the Sunni Triangle. He mounted signs throughout his men's command posts and barracks reading "What have you done today to win Iraqi hearts and minds?" In the comparatively philo-American northern districts that Petraeus administered, this was probably the correct strategy, and it succeeded in many ways. But his region flared into violence at the end of 2003, at the very time when regions where the commanders had been sterner were quieting down. I am told by people who have studied the north closely that there is reason to think Gen. Petraeus's comparative gentleness with, for instance, ex-Baathists in Mosul had something to do with their revived audacity later in the year.

There is a fine line to be walked here. That can be opera-

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tionally tricky, and extremely difficult psychologically for the soldiers. Tragically, one of the soldiers killed in Fallujah, where I write this, died when he was ambushed while on his way to donate classroom supplies to a local school.

As he reflected on the nine months he and his soldiers had spent in Baghdad, Col. Fuller noted that this was the very first time in history where U.S. forces have participated in large-scale urban fighting while simultaneously rebuilding the area being struggled over. At the very same time they conducted more than 500 raids and captured more than 2,000 suspected insurgents, the paratroopers also carried out $4.1 million worth of building projects, and set up 15 different democracy councils across the city. While rebuilding schools and fixing roads, his men endured 130 firefights, 39 mortar attacks, and 140 roadside bombings. Fuller commended his troopers for showing the ability to accomplish both missions.

There are those who have suggested the U.S. Army should be broken into two different kinds of forces: one that fights lightning wars with great violence and speed. And a constabulary force that administers the peace after the war. This suggestion sounds much more plausible on paper than it does amidst the realities of Iraq.

"I'd like to know which kind of force that theory would prescribe for Iraq today," responds Lieutenant Colonel Eric Castles, the quiet, thoughtful commander of about a thousand of the 82nd's paratroopers in Baghdad, when I ask him about this. "Hardly a day passes where we don't need to both fight and build up something here. And both wings need the other to succeed."

Commander Drinkwine has concluded much the same thing from his time battling the insurgency in Fallujah. He tells his soldiers they must have "a day face and a night face." That is, there are times they need to be open and friendly, and times when they must strike very hard. Sometimes they must do each of these things one right after another. But they must struggle to keep their actions and their feelings compartmentalized, and appropriately matched to whichever group of Iraqis they are interacting with.

Once again we see the importance of delicately balancing the hard and the soft in the prosecution of this guerilla war. And yet again we see how much this fight against terror demands of our military men and women.

Do It Yourself A paratrooper instructs new Iraqi police officers on how to search vehicles at a traffic checkpoint.

COUNTERINSURGENCY VS. DEPENDENCY

In one place where I thought the Army might be making a counterinsurgency mistake—their consolidation of bases in Baghdad—I'm now not so sure.

In the southwestern quadrant of Baghdad alone, controlled by the 82nd Airborne, there were at one point 14 different U.S. bases. The classic military literature on how to fight a guerilla war says that's exactly the right tactic. Counterinsurgency fighters must avoid isolated fortresses and get out among the populace, where they can make friends and disarm enemies, gather intelligence, and be positioned to intervene quickly.

But over the last months, most of those Army posts scattered throughout Baghdad were closed down. Nearly all the soldiers have been consolidated into a very large property in a former industrial area south of the city, surrounded by a brand new 15-foot wall. This makes it easier to provision the soldiers, and with only one perimeter to be guarded instead of many, the troops are likely safer. But by most counterinsurgency theory, this is the wrong way to go. "I'm against it," one company commander tells me. "We've got a concrete wall around us and a three-hour wait for walk-ins to get access to an American. When we were in our neighborhood base I used to have a line outside the entrance, and I got tons of useful information that way every single day. Since we moved in here, the amount of information I have to work with has plummeted."

But there is another side to this story. This consolidation was not undertaken for the convenience or security of the American troops. It was ordered by Baghdad-area commander General Martin Dempsey, I discovered, for very specific operational reasons. His directive ordering the relocations states that by pulling American troops out of the city's heart and resettling them at a few perimeter points he expects to 1) remove a psychological irritant in the neighborhoods by sharply diminishing the appearance that this is an occupying army, and 2) make Iraqis take more responsibility for their own security, rather than letting them become dependent on American protection.

Lt. Col. Castles gives his own explanation: "My battalion alone had five different operating bases at one point, and that was the right answer when we first arrived, because there was not much structure or law-enforcement in this country. But as we've started showing progress in the city, I've felt it was important to gradually pull back and let the Iraqis run their own business. And this has basically worked.

"The biggest challenge is intel—getting people to come up to us at this new base as they did at the old ones. There was definitely a dip when we moved. But now that we've settled here, and people are finding us, our contacts are rising again. I'm confident we can keep ourselves open enough to maintain the flow of public feedback."

Col. Fuller, who has had more combat experience in small wars amidst civilian populations than almost any other officer in the U.S. Army, offers a comparison when I ask him about the wisdom of the base consolidation. "In Kosovo, we have gotten

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ourselves trapped in scores of scattered camps. We stayed too long and now can't withdraw because we're the only stabilizers and preventers of violence.

"I consolidated our operating bases to avoid creating that same dependency among the people of Baghdad. We have to turn things over to them. Even if they're initially not up to the full responsibility. The way you learn how to provide security is by just doing it.

"The key piece of this fight is to get the decent Iraqis to take it over for themselves. We're pulling back to get operational standoff. And to avoid generating dependency on us among the residents of this city."

The Baghdad base consolidation, I have concluded, is a sign of the confidence our military feels that they've gotten the guerilla war under control. "One of the reasons for the intelligence dip we saw in the late fall around here was not our November move, but simply that we'd already picked up so many of the main troublemakers," says Dave Elsen, 3rd Battalion's military intelligence officer.

The arrival of the Marines will bring yet another take, and a fresh set of efforts, on this question. Gen. Mattis has pushed his commanders to study a Vietnam-era program that spread U.S. platoons into villages and communities where, as local residents, they both pacified the immediate region and collected information and local allegiances that helped the wider prosecution of the war. The Marines are giving special "community policing" and language training to one platoon from each of the nine battalions they are bringing into Iraq this spring. The intention is to place these so-called CAP units in some critical locale where they can chip away at insurgents from within their own neighborhood. Lt. Col. Byrne tells me he is thinking about posting one of his platoons in an Iraqi Police station in some area where they feel particularly under seige. Time will tell, but local experiments and trial-and-error tests of this sort are the best ways to find effective new paths in a low-intensity fight like this one.

RAIDING THE RAIDERS

Our military leaders in Iraq are definitely heading toward the next stage—where the Iraqi police and army will increasingly take control of their own security, while American forces serve as a backstop. That is progress. Completing this will require more time, though, and experience has taught U.S. troops the importance of taking the fight to the guerillas in the meantime. At 0500 this morning, the Red Devils kick off their latest initiative, an all-day operation called "Desert Swarm," which will bring about 500 troopers into the town of Uwaylim, source of numerous recent attacks. Americans have hardly entered this zone in recent weeks. That is a tactic commanders use to lull insurgents: They stay away from a sector long enough to make local troublemakers feel safe, which is when rebels start stashing weapons and wanted men in that area. At which point the 82nd will swoop in and scoop out whatever they can find.

Soldiers have taken serious fire from Uwaylim. A local radical mosque is suspected of fomenting attacks. Several desperados are thought to have recently taken up refuge in the town. Almost certainly there are IEDs planted along local roads, waiting for a ripe opportunity to be detonated.

Literally walking through a large "sand table" map of the region laid out in paint, rope, and wooden blocks on a 30' x 30' expanse of bare dirt at one edge of the camp, commanders rehearse their raid. Various types of possible resistance are discussed. The most difficult part, warns Lt. Col. Hagen, could be getting out. "There are only a handful of outlet roads from the area, and they'll have five or six hours to set up IEDs and ambushes along them while we're conducting our searches in the central zone. So take great care."

A Morning's Work Battalion commander Marshall Hagen supervises a large cordon-and-search operation by several hundred of his men in a rural area between Baghdad and Fallujah.

One reason this area has prickled with attacks is because it was the final location of a major Republican Guard unit at the end of the hot war. The unit left behind voluminous ammo stashes in the groves and along the canals and roads, giving local miscreants much to work with. There are indications that many of the male residents were soldiers themselves—old helmets, empty ammo boxes, optical sights, and shell casings litter many of the yards and homes. In one house where I accompany searchers, a pair of night-vision goggles is found. Parked in yards and driveways are even several tanks (engines, sights, and other

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valuable parts stripped out months ago)—the Iraqi version of an Appalachian pickup truck up on cinder blocks, stowed away because you never know when it's going to come in handy.

Soldiers passing through this quadrant have been shot at recently, in some cases in sophisticated coordinated ambushes using a combination of IEDs, machine guns, and small arms. This suggests to American officers they may have brushed up against a security zone for something Iraqi insurgents want to protect. Maybe a large cache? A cell leader?

As the sun begins to rise, I follow the battalion commander past a mosque and a weedy canal to a collection of buildings where two brothers on this morning's target list, Mohammed and Jassim Khudari, are rumored to live. Two of the homes are grubby farm houses with the usual complement of a few cows, some chickens, a pigeon roost. The other is more pretentious. As dawn blooms, a squad rouses a large, hard-faced man from the main house, who admits right away that he is Jassim. A search quickly yields multiple ID cards with the same picture but a variety of names. There are also documents that indicate Jassim was a major in the Iraqi army, and a member of Saddam's Presidential Security Service.

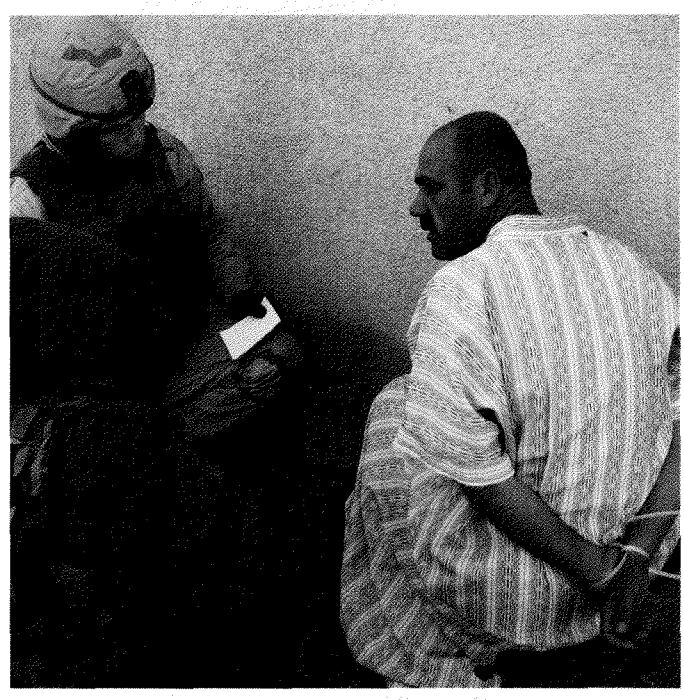
"These guys are real bad about keeping their souvenirs from the former regime," chuckles an intelligence officer, as he pulls out a letter that begins, "Our love for Saddam Hussein is deep in our hearts…." In the house next door, number-two brother Mohammed is captured without a struggle, and a collection of videotapes showing Chechen Islamic guerillas killing Russians (a favorite among Muslim extremist fighters) is found. Most damning, the main house contains a wireless phone with two handsets, and a large supplemental antenna jury-rigged to the base unit.

Since there are no phone lines to plug into in most of Iraq, there is only one use for such a device: setting off IEDs. Fighters wire the relay inside the phone to a blasting cap attached to artillery shells. Then they dial the phone number programmed into the base unit, and when it rings—boom! The combat engineer in this Army squad, a quick study on the insurgents' electronic innovations, has seen this particular phone model used many times in IED attacks. Other favorite gadgets used for remote detonating are garage door openers and car alarms.

LIFE AND DEATH

The paratroopers of the 504 know the dangers of IEDs very well. They have named the just-opened Internet-access tent at their base for Captain Ernesto Blanco, a Texas A&M grad and support platoon officer known as "Big Ern," who was killed when his convoy was bombed in nearby Karmah on December 28. Many or most of the troopers I am with have had their own close personal brush with a roadside explosion. Some squads have been bombed three or four times.

And there are other risks for these fighters. Each of the battalions I visited in Iraq had lost a half-dozen or more men. "After ambushes or mortar attacks, sometimes we just have to get out a hose to wash away the blood left in the bay," one medevac helicopter pilot told me quietly.



Dumb Loyalist When Jassim Khudari was captured in a dawn raid, his letters professing "deep love" for Saddam were still in his home, along with multiple false identity cards, and a device for triggering roadside bombs.

The way Sergeant Andrew Baddick perished was less dramatic than a bombing or shooting, but equally heartbreaking and heroic. While on a night combat patrol near Abu Ghuraib, Baddick saw a Military Police humvee roll into an irrigation canal, trapping four M.P.s in 12 feet of fast-flowing water. He stripped off his equipment and dove in to help the struggling men as they were swept downstream. He pulled one soldier, heavily laden with body armor and helmet, to the surface and pushed him up the bank. Told that another M.P. had sunk under the water, Baddick shouted, "I'll get him!" and dove down—only to be sucked into a culvert that carried the water underground beneath a highway, where he drowned.

And then there are the non-life-threatening risks and strains that soldiers bear. Many of the paratroopers in the 82nd served most of a year in Afghanistan, were home for seven months, and then redeployed to Iraq. They know the reason they've been sent into the very angriest portion of the country is because they are some of the best soldiers in our military. They are proud of that, and amazingly spirited, energetic, and uncomplaining in their day-to-day work. But there are many pressures on them.

"When I get home in May I will have spent two of the previous 28 months with my eight- and four-year-old kids," states Captain Gary Love.

"Yeah, and Captain Ryan Huston has spent the last four Christmases away from home," someone else chimes in.

"I'm not complaining," notes an 82nd captain named Chris Cirino with a big smile, "but over the last 18 months, I've been deployed overseas 446 days. And counting."

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FRIEND OR FOE

Back in the field with the soldiers of the 504, the radio crackles to report that other individuals targeted in this morning's raid have been picked up. That puts the battalion at four for four in captures this morning. At every house they enter, the paratroopers do a visual weapons search and use mine detectors to probe outdoor areas for metallic stashes. Officers diligently question men, catching many in lies or improbable stories, which they then try to leverage into information on anti-Coalition forces in the area.

Commander Hagen stops at a secretive signals intelligence truck with an antenna I am not allowed to photograph. The operator is able to monitor some neighborhood conversations as soldiers pull up outside various houses, and he passes tidbits he has gleaned to the commander. Next we sweep over to a home where a cooperative farmer reports that some brothers living across the road behind some date palms were the masterminds of a bombing and fierce ambush against American soldiers on November 7. "Yeah, those were our guys who got hit," says Hagen, noticeably perking up his ears at this information. In that heavy firefight two of his men earned decorations for valor.

"It'd be nice to get some payback for that one, sir," states a soldier.

"You know, the platoon that got hit then, the 1st, is here today," comments a sergeant. "Including Sergeant Ferguson, who can't hear any more since the attack."

"I'd sure like to see a good firefight initiated by us for once," the sergeant adds.

The Iraqi informant speaks up again. The same brothers who set up the ambush also recently murdered a local man after he gave information to the Americans.

"Don't worry, we'll keep your identity from being known. And we won't go directly there from here. So they won't be able to associate you with our arrival," reassures the soldier doing the questioning.

At just this moment a small pickup truck creeps down the dirt trail we are standing next to. Two men in front gesticulate excitedly. Sitting upright in the truck bed is a very sour, very swollen woman. "Beeeby, Beeby!" I hear the men say as they bump by on their way to a midwife, or hospital, or whomever assists in this area when new lives begin.

It's sometimes hard to remember that the normal dramas of life continue to unfold across this war zone: families forming, students studying for exams, boys wooing girls. On several tense combat patrols in the heart of Iraqi cities I've been startled to hear or observe automatic weapons fire outside a mosque, only to realize that it's not an attack, but celebration of a wedding. (Strange custom, I must say, and more than a little dangerous in these conditions.)

We cross into the back field of the farmer-informant, where a knot of soldiers has gathered. An alert trooper, noticing a heap of earth in a strange place in a shallow irrigation channel, has uncovered two plastic bags full of AK-47 ammunition and clips. The plot thickens. "Where did these come from?" queries a squad leader.

"I don't know. Maybe my neighbor planted them there," answers the farmer's son.

"That's not possible so close to your house. You have a loud dog."

"It's been cold. The dog must have stayed in his hole."

"I think you're lying."

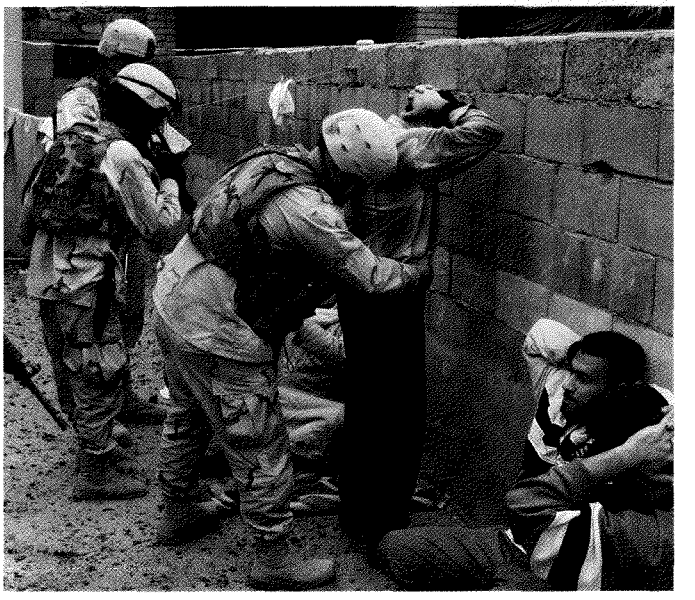
The friendly informant's family has suddenly turned out to possess an impermissibly large quantity of arms. Are they insurgents themselves? Merely stocked up to protect themselves from revengeful neighbors? Who can be trusted?

Hagen decides to let the evidence sort this out. He gets on the radio to his operations officer and they plan a quick raid on the houses of the two brothers. An hour and a half later, their farmsteads are surrounded by Bradley fighting vehicles and perhaps 40 dismounted Americans. Soldiers enter the premises and begin to question the wives and older men of the family. The brothers, they are told, are "at work."

"Where?"

"We don't know."

Very likely the two men are skittering through some nearby ditch or palm grove as we speak. But the soldiers now know where they live, and they will return very soon, probably in the middle of the night, repeatedly if necessary, until they have questioned the men or driven them from the area.



After the Blast Paratroopers storm into a residential compound and frisk all present after an IED planted directly across the street rocked one of the 82nd's humvees. It turned out, however, that these family members were terror victims just like the soldiers.

IN THE SNAKE PIT

I've now shifted to another of the 82nd's battalions, the 1-505, which is responsible for Fallujah city proper. In a country that could yield a regular highlights film of urban snake pits, this is one of the most troublous assignments in Iraq. Over the last few months this battalion has been running more combat operations than any unit in Iraq, averaging a major raid about every 18 hours, and occasionally executing as many as five separate hits in a single day. Having been assigned to Iraq's worst hornet's nest, they

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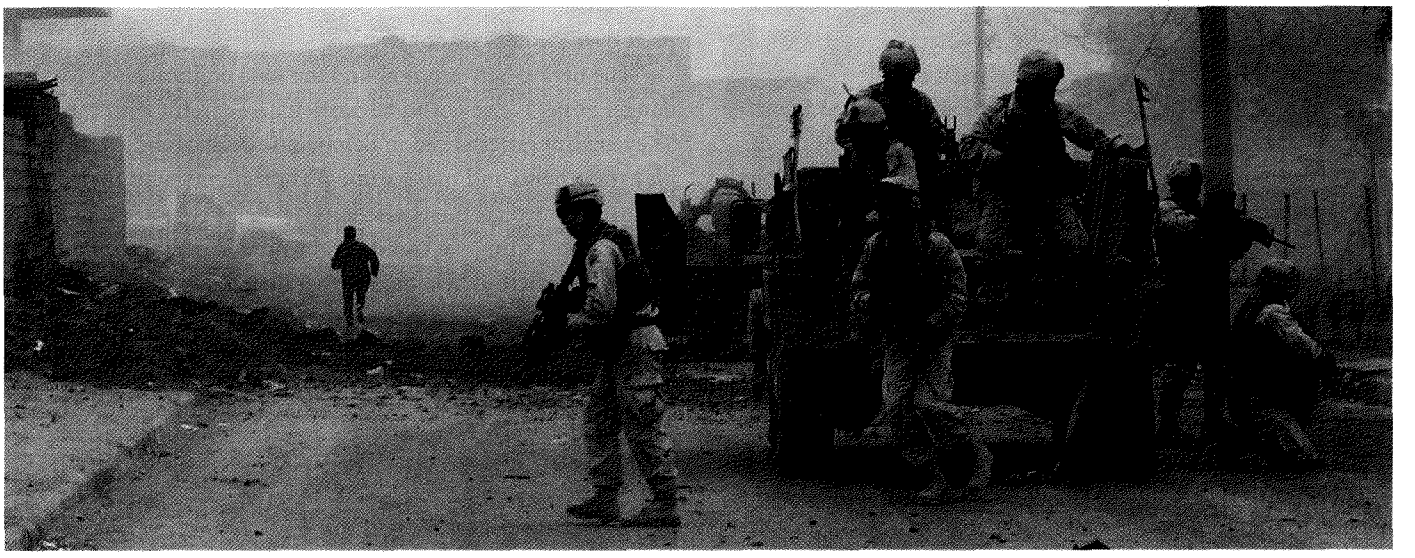

Nation-building Fighters Immediately after U.S. soldiers orchestrated an historic Fallujah City Council meeting where a president was elected in the city's first democratic ballot, their exit convoy was hit with an IED. This photo was taken from two trucks back just seconds after the detonation.

About an hour before the scheduled event we clatter into the compound housing the city youth center (or "Uouth Center" as the sign reads), one of the few local halls big enough and defensible enough to hold a meeting for 42 councilors. Snipers climb onto the roofs of several adjoining buildings, Alpha Company foot patrols set out into the surrounding neighborhoods, gun trucks position themselves facing outward, and explosives experts give the interior of the building a once-over.

Because of the security strains in this region, the local democracy councils are not nearly so far along as in the Baghdad area and some other parts of Iraq. Here, the Army officers still provide the direction and energy, while the locals listen and question. The interim mayor, a cheerful little banty rooster with a flashing smile, greets arriving councilors at the door, but he seems a mildly comical figure who lacks weight. In the entry hall he fusses excitedly with a small box of goodies from America he has received from someone. "What is this?" he asks, holding up a dispenser of Speed Stick deodorant. The soldier points to his underarms, "to make you smell nice." Mayor Ra'ad returns a slightly quizzical look. "And this, for my wife?" he asks, pointing to a can of Gillette shaving cream. "Not unless she has a beard," smiles the soldier.

But the transition to Iraqi self-rule is very much under way. The meeting opens with a nice little speech in which the mayor states that Iraq's regression over the last generation is the result of corruption extending from the bottom right up to the very highest levels of Iraqi society. He presents a brief but eloquent plea for greater public rectitude, and more concern for the needy among Fallujah's leaders, and says this will be the key to healing the city. Next, a trio of local lawyers read their draft of a proposed set of city by-laws. And then the council takes the very first vote of its existence: to choose a council president.

It has the feeling of a senior class election, with a call for nominations from Lt. Col. Drinkwine, speeches by the candidates on why they are the right man for the job, and finally a vote. But this is no popularity contest; it is an historic occasion—Fallujah's maiden stab at real representative democracy.

Drinkwine passes out blank ballots and explains the concept and practice of a secret vote. He calls a judge, a lawyer, and a local imam to the stage to ceremoniously open the completed ballots and read them aloud, one at a time. In the end, a businessman with an engineering degree is selected as the new president of the Fallujah Provisional Advisory Council, immediately taking his place on the stage with the American commander. A process has begun which will soon let the council elect the city mayor and take direct control of all city departments (where services are currently plagued by corruption and incompetence under department heads installed by the nepotistic local sheiks).

This election is a happy turn of events. Reflecting the reactionary social structure of this area, the council has a much heavier representation of imams and tribal sheiks than other councils I have observed—and here as elsewhere in Iraq these clan leaders have proven to be quite parochial, self-interested, and generally disappointing. Letting this election take place was something of a risk for the U.S. commanders, for the voting in of a firebrand was not inconceivable. Fortunately, even in Fallujah better educated and more cooperative individuals from the professional and business classes are gradually taking control of the council. The elevation of Dr. Mohammed Hasan al-Balwa to the chair is a further step in this productive direction.

The final portion of this marathon meeting features the first-ever public appearance in Fallujah of an official from the Coalition Provisional Authority. Keith Mines sketches the forthcoming transition to Iraqi self-rule, and explains that the CPA plans to dissolve itself at the end of June, at which point the authority's American staff will start to work for the U.S. Embassy.

Mines then outlines the tentative plan for caucuses to select an interim legislature for Anbar Province, the state-like administrative unit of which Fallujah is a part. There will be quotas at the caucuses for the representation of a wide variety of occupations

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and demographic groups. This brings an intervention from an imam in the audience, who appeals for elimination of the seats for women's affairs, in exchange for additional seats in some other category. He assures the Americans that no woman in all of Fallujah would be willing to travel to Ramadi and appear in public to take part in such a caucus. This brings an astonished chuckle from Mines, after which the speaker insists, with heads nodding about him, that inquiries have been made, and no female Fallujans are interested in joining such a provincial council.

This is the kind of issue that must simply be glided over for the moment. Mines wades onward to explain the distinction, not at all clear to his Iraqi questioners, between a legislative and an executive branch, and how the legislature will appoint provincial executives. He takes many questions, and promises to carry local suggestions back to the CPA's Baghdad headquarters.

At one point, the shockwave of a large explosion rocks the building, but Drinkwine continues the meeting with barely an acknowledgement, as if thundering explosions were a normal part of city life. (They are in Fallujah.) In this case, my quick consultation with a radio operator reveals that this was a controlled demolition of confiscated munitions by a U.S. bomb squad. Throughout the afternoon, occasional bursts of automatic gunfire can be heard in other city precincts. By Fallujah's standards, this has so far been a quiet day.

HARD-FOUGHT WINS

At around 1600, the councilors quickly depart, and soldiers trickle down from the rooftops and off of foot patrol, piling back into their trucks. Our 18-vehicle convoy re-forms, takes a left out of the youth center compound, and heads down a narrow alley lined with cinder block walls and heaped garbage. Barely half a block down there is suddenly a tremendous boom and I see a spray of earth and smoke jet several stories into the sky just two trucks ahead of us.

A roadside bomb. Debris rains down on our humvee, and my right ear, slightly deafened, begins to ache. "Holy s---!" shouts Sergeant Lopez from behind the wheel.

Soldiers pour from the stopped vehicles, peering sharply, fingers on triggers, for gunmen who might launch a coordinated ambush. They burst into the house immediately opposite the crater to see if the person who detonated the blast might be there. It turns out to be a family with small children. Their front gate and windows have been shredded by shrapnel, and water pours from their perforated water tank. A small child's bicycle lays on its side amidst shattered glass and chunks of blast debris. Clearly these people didn't set off the bomb; it's a miracle they weren't badly hurt themselves. Once again the insurgents have shown no concern whatsoever for everyday Iraqis such as these.

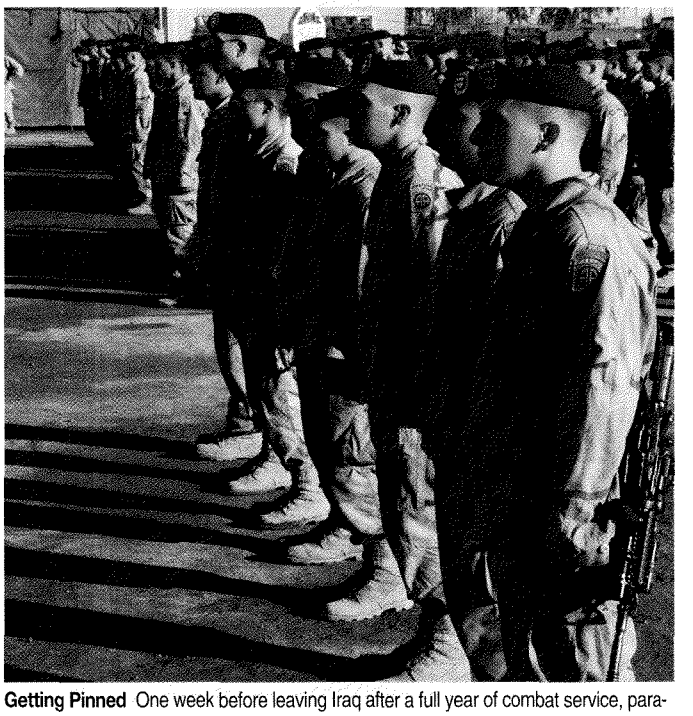
Cpt. Chris Cirino, a former explosives expert, scrambles into the four-foot-deep crater and digs up shrapnel and the remains of a 9-volt battery. A single 155mm artillery shell wired with a blasting cap, he thinks. Amazingly, there are no serious injuries to the soldiers. The blast came just between two humvees, and the surrounding earth absorbed much of its force. The armored windshields of the closest vehicle are shattered, and two soldiers have concussions and hearing loss. Everyone in the truck is shaken up, but that is all. Providence was smiling this afternoon.

At the Battle Update Brief the next day, the commander of the rifle company that provided the security for the council meeting—a wiry, nervous, intense captain named Caliguire—tells the battalion commander bluntly that he thinks it is tactically dangerous to put soldiers, at an advertised time every week, into a cramped location with only a few exits. This is just an invitation for a carefully pre-planned attack.

"Sir, that is the fifth time the platoon hit by that IED has been blasted. They've been very lucky, and they keep getting up and dusting themselves off, but it's only a matter of time until our string runs out. We're taking awful chances to guard these damn council meetings. We're just inviting them to have bombs waiting for us."

Drinkwine, a mild and reflective upstate New Yorker who falls on the intellectual side of the commander spectrum, hears him out and lets some other officers comment. Then he answers in his placid and careful way. "Look, we've got no choice. That's the only location where these meetings can be held, and we need to have them regularly each week so people come to think of them as part of the fabric of the city's life.

"And I want you to remember something: By getting this governmental body up and running we are beating our opponents. We are showing this whole city that we will not be intimidated. We are showing them that a new era is coming. We are showing them that there is a more productive way. And the enemy's only response is a bomb that mostly hurts an Iraqi family. That's pretty pitiful in the face of what we're accomplishing here. An historic



Getting Pinned One week before leaving Iraq after a full year of combat service, paratroopers of the 325th Regiment line up to be pinned with their Combat Infantry Badge.

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transformation is taking place in this city, and we're in combat to protect it. We've just got to keep fighting through the resistance.

"And listen: I want you officers to tell your troopers that. I want you to tell them why we're doing this. Many of your Joes have no idea what's going on inside that building, and whether it's worth the risks we're taking to be there. Remind them as they're standing exposed on rooftops or walking the streets for four hours why these meetings matter. You tell them we are planting powerful seeds that will change this country forever, so our sons don't have to come back here in the future."

When I interview Major Michael Bottiglieri, the battallion's operations chief, he makes a similar point in a different way. A Texan both physically and emotionally darker than Lt. Col. Drinkwine, the major is no-nonsense, a bit curt, secretive, energetic. He and his boss make a good team.

Bottiglieri draws a bell-shaped curve with a marker on a whiteboard, and says, "This is what Iraqi society looks like—you've got a small population at one end that is openly hostile, and a small population at the opposite end of the curve that is enthusiastically helpful. And then you've got this big bulge in the middle. That middle is where both ends are fighting to draw resources from. The bad guys and the good guys both need to pull from there for intel, physical safety, material and financial resources, and so forth. Right now the middle population is moving more our way than the other way. There are still bad guys out there, but they're losing the battle for the convictions of the middle.

"There will always be some danger here for us, because it only takes one unbalanced person to stick an IED in the ground. But I can tell you things are definitely getting better. We are winning."

ROLLING WITH THE PUNCHES

I have been invited to interview Maj. Gen. Swannack at the 82nd's Division headquarters at Ramadi. That's about an hour and a half up a highway infested with common bandits and insurgents, so you don't set off at your convenience. I work out a ride at dawn on a Monday morning on the weekly gravy train that goes up to fetch the battalion's cold, hard, spending cash—a half-million dollars this week.

But in the middle of the night a lieutenant comes into the hooch and tells me the trip has been cancelled. That's as much information as you get in an army at war. The next morning I look at my calendar and realize I have a magazine deadline and a college lecture commitment in New York looming, and decide I can't wait for the next shuttle to Ramadi, which could be days. So I walk to the command post and see about mooching a ride to Baghdad International Airport.

I'm in luck. In five minutes a convoy is heading down to the CPA compound in Baghdad. And my new friend Lt. Col. Tony Layton—the commander of the 82nd's artillery regiment who has become a jack-of-all-trades in this era of guerilla war—is in charge. Yet again I am a beneficiary of soldierly kindness; he tasks one humvee to peel off from the convoy and deliver me to the airport.

As we drive, we pass a large and very fresh IED crater. Three American trucks are stopped beside it. Someone is examining the hole. An M.P. waves us past.

Then more luck: Prepared to wait for hours or even days on a space-available list, I get myself quickly manifested on a C-130 to Kuwait City. With nearly two hours to kill, I pull off an improvised shower, my first in a week and a half, and a pure thrill despite the lack of a towel, shampoo, and other niceties. After a period of abstinence, simple hot water is the most appreciated element on earth.

Then I pile onto the Air Force cargo plane, settle into the nylon netting that serves as a sling seat, and pull out my laptop to write away the 90-minute flight out of long-suffering Iraq. It's not until we touch down in Kuwait that I stand and peer into the dark at the rear of the cargo bay and realize that I've shared this flight not only with 35 living soldiers but also with one deceased one. There, about 20 feet away, sits a gray metal casket draped with an American flag.

The loadmaster asks us all to remain seated until the body is carried off. We remove our helmets. The soldier standing in the receiving truck salutes. The casket slides quietly behind a curtain draping the vehicle's rear. We de-plane.

Dutiful Soldiers A C-130 military transport carrying the author and 35 American G.I.s out of Iraq also transported the body of a fallen comrade killed in the line of duty.

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Hillsdale College Announces
The Eighth Recipient of the $25,000

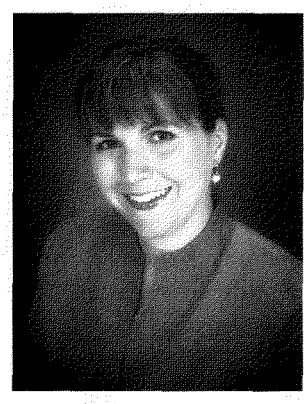
Henry Salvatori Prize For "Excellence in Teaching"

Each fall, Hillsdale College seeks nominations for the Henry Salvatori Prize for "Excellence in Teaching." This prize honors teachers in grades K-12 who are committed to rigorous standards and to a traditional, time-tested approach to education. Endowed by the late businessman and philanthropist Henry Salvatori, this competition is open to teachers in non-profit private and public schools who have employed the *Hillsdale Academy Reference Guide*. Winners receive a $25,000 cash award payable to their school.

DiAnne McClenahan, of Temecula Preparatory School in Winchester, California, is hereby named the recipient of the 2003 Henry Salvatori Prize for "Excellence in Teaching."

The *Hillsdale Academy Reference Guide* is an invaluable resource for teachers, administrators and parents who seek to educate their children in a well-balanced core of essential subjects. Based on the daily operation of Hillsdale Academy, the K-12 model school of Hillsdale College, the *Guide* contains information on curricula, supplementary reading, school culture and administrative policies. It is already in use at over 400 schools in all 50 states, as well as by countless home-schooling parents.

To learn more about the Henry Salvatori Prize for "Excellence in Teaching" or the *Hillsdale Academy Reference Guide*, call **(800) 989-7323** or log on to **www.hillsdale.edu/academy**.



"The Hillsdale Academy framework has enabled our charter school to achieve and maintain very impressive scores on standardized tests . . . . In fact, the first year that we were open, my fifth grade class ranked the highest in Riverside and San Diego Counties. What makes this even more interesting is that I do very little in preparing my class for the actual test. The Hillsdale framework proves to be strong enough to ready these students without extraneous worksheets that teach to the test."

DiAnne McClenahan
Fifth Grade Teacher
Temecula Preparatory School
Winchester, California

2003 Recipient of the Henry Salvatori Prize for "Excellence in Teaching"

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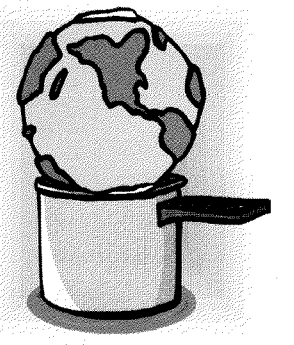
Global Warming Is All Guesses



From the Caltech Michelin Lecture delivered by science novelist Michael Crichton at the California Institute of Technology.

To an outsider, the most significant innovation in the global warming controversy is the overt reliance that is placed on models. There can be no observational data about the year 2100. There are only model runs.

This fascination with computer models is something I understand very well. Richard Feynman called it a disease. I fear he is right. Because only if you spend a lot of time looking at a computer screen can you arrive at the complex point where the global warming debate now stands. Nobody believes a weather prediction 12 hours ahead. Now we're asked to believe a prediction that goes out 100 years into the future? And to make huge financial investments based on that prediction? Has everybody lost their minds?

Stepping back, I have to say the arrogance of the modelmakers is breathtaking. There have been, in every century, scientists who say they know it all. Since climate may be a chaotic system—no one is sure—these predictions are inherently doubtful, to be polite. But more to the point, even if the models get the science spot-on, they can never get the sociology. To predict anything about the world a hundred years from now is simply absurd.

Look: If I was selling stock in a company that I told you would be profitable in 2100, would you buy it? Or would you think the idea was so crazy that it must be a scam?

Let's think back to people in 1900 in, say, New York. If they worried about conditions in 2000, what would they worry about? Probably: Where would people get enough horses? And what would they do about all the horse manure? Horse pollution was bad in 1900, think how much worse it would be a century later, with so many more people riding horses?

But of course, within a few years, nobody rode horses except for sport. And in 2000, France was getting 80 percent of its power from an energy source that was unknown in 1900 (nuclear fission). Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, and Japan were getting more than 30 percent from this previously unknown source. Remember, people in 1900 didn't know what an atom was. They didn't know its structure. They also didn't know what a radio was, or an airport, or a movie, or a television, or a computer, or a cell phone, or a jet, an antibiotic, a rocket, a satellite, an MRI, ICU, IUD, IBM, IRA, ERA, EEG, EPA, IRS, DOD, PCP, HTML, Internet, interferon, instant replay, remote sensing, remote control, speed dialing, gene therapy, gene splicing, genes, spot welding, heat-seeking, bipolar, Prozac, leotards, lap dancing, e-mail, tape recorder, CDs, airbags, plastic explosive, plastic, robots, cars, liposuction, transduction, superconduction, dish antennas, step aerobics, smoothies, twelve-step, ultrasound, nylon, rayon, Teflon, fiber optics, carpal tunnel, laser surgery, laparoscopy, corneal transplant, kidney transplant, AIDS. None of this would have meant anything to a person in the year 1900. They wouldn't know what you are talking about.

Now. You tell me you can predict the world of 2100. Convince me it's even worth thinking about. Our models just carry the present into the future. They're bound to be wrong. Everybody who gives a moment's thought knows it.

I remind you that in the lifetime of most scientists now living, we have already had an example of dire predictions set aside by new technology. I refer to the Green Revolution. In 1960, Paul Ehrlich said, "The battle to feed humanity is over. In the 1970s the world will undergo famines—hundreds of millions of people are going to starve to death." Ten years later, he predicted 4 billion people would die during the 1980s, including 65 million Americans. The mass starvation that was predicted never occurred, and it now seems it isn't ever going to happen. Nor is the population explosion going to reach the numbers predicted even ten years ago. In 1990, climate modelers anticipated a world population of 11 billion by 2100. Today, some people think the correct number will be 7 billion and falling. But nobody knows for sure.

It is impossible to ignore how closely the argument over global warming fits this template.

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In Real Life

First-person America

Writer-in-Hesitance

By Steve Salerno

ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA—Midway through last semester, word began filtering back to the pooh-bahs at Allentown's Muhlenberg College, where I served as an adjunct professor of writing, that despite my lack of a terminal degree, perhaps I wasn't such an unqualified disaster in the classroom after all. A horrific glitch in the registrar's computer had placed some of the English department's top students under my supervision, and apparently they were now singing the praises of their new favorite professor—yours truly. They emphasized in particular what a magnificent job I did of introducing them to "writing as it's practiced out in the real world."

Normally, this is the point at which I would have been fired on the spot. But, like many liberal-arts colleges these days, Muhlenberg finds itself dealing with a sudden, inexplicable phenomenon: a surge in the number of writing students who've come to realize that not too many magazines or book publishers need trenchant works pertaining to *Beowulf*, or even Virginia Woolf. Students have begun demanding coursework with a more pragmatic tilt. Thus, after undertaking a broad inquiry intended to ensure that I was neither molesting the coeds nor—worse—promoting a classroom climate that tolerated sociopolitical views to the right of Che Guevara, my department chairman approached me one day. "You know, we really like you, Steve," he said. "You think you'd be able to teach two courses next semester instead of just one?" For this, he offered me twice my pay—the low salary of an adjunct professor.

It occurred to me that Muhlenberg's actual objective here might be to add a faculty member at wages more appropriate to jobs that require the holder to ask questions like "paper or plastic?" So a few days later I found my way to my chairman's office and told him I'd be delighted to teach two classes for the school, but that I wanted a visiting professorship, at commensurate professorial remuneration. I assume that his laughter subsided in time.

The following day he returned, grimacing, to my dank end of the hall, to inform me that although he had no visiting professorships, the school might conceivably make me its writer-in-residence. He was careful to point out that this posed problems of some delicacy, for I was not exactly the prototypical author imagined in such august academic arrangements.

Colleges tend to bestow writer-in-residence appointments upon the sorts of *litterateurs* who are forever in danger of having the heat in their cat-laden garrets shut off, or are under investigation by John Ashcroft for links to groups plotting the violent overthrow of the U.S. government. Every decade or so, they produce some impenetrable poetry or fiction for publications with names like *Zephyr of the Ephemeral Consciousness*. As part of their duties, they're expected to host semi-regular public readings of their work, which, for many of them, may be the only time that work is experienced by anyone other than family members or fellow terrorist-sympathizers. I had written books people could order on Amazon, and sometimes even did. I wondered how the department could justify giving so prominent a platform to a writer whose work could be understood without the aid of mind-altering substances.

My mind swirling in such deep concerns, I asked my department chair the obvious, all-important question.

"So how much would you pay me to be your writer-in-residence?"

We went back and forth on the matter of salary for several days. At week's end the dean of faculty himself e-mailed me with the school's final offer—three times the usual adjunct rate. Or about half the rate for bona fide professors. In return for this largesse, my chairman later informed me, I would have to "find something" to do to justify my existence.

I took the deal. After some discussion, we settled on my giving talks to local high-school seniors about how writing skills can enrich one's life. I can only assume the English department sought to avoid the certain embarrassment of parading its lowly journalist-cum-writer-in-residence before more culturally aware factions, like, say, the adult population of Allentown.

But I'm not going to feel glum about such things tonight. No. Tonight, I shall break out the bubbly and revel in my writer-in-residency, secure in the knowledge that that, plus the usual 50 cents, will get me a cup of coffee in the school's vending machines.

Steve Salerno writes without hesitation for The American Enterprise.

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Flashback

To know nothing of what happened before you were born is to remain ever a child—Cicero

Millard Fillmore—Seriously

By Bill Kauffman

Blessed are the peacemakers? Well, perhaps in the Gospel of Matthew, but not in the Gospel of the Schlesingers. Those surveys in which historians are asked to rank the U.S. Presidents—most notably the polls organized by Arthur Schlesinger, Sr. and later Jr.—consistently place wartime Presidents in the "great" or "near-great" categories while consigning men of peace to the squalid precincts of "below average" and "failure." If only Warren G. Harding had invaded Mexico...

Who was our most peaceable President? The Quaker Herbert Hoover was a quasi-pacifist, but as a western New Yorker I must award the white dove to none other than Buffalo's Millard Fillmore, 13th President of the United States and a man whose name has become little more than a punch line.

Poor Millard. Queen Victoria is said to have called him the most handsome man she had ever seen, and he is often credited with "amiability," but beyond that all is mockery and scorn.

A former Buffalo Congressman of modest means, the Whig Fillmore assumed the Presidency in 1850 after President Zachary Taylor died as a result of gorging on iced milk and cherries at an Independence Day celebration. (No indignity is too great to heap upon Fillmore, even posthumously. In 1991, Taylor's corpse was exhumed to see if Fillmore partisans had poisoned Old Rough and Ready. Of course they hadn't. The gluttonous Taylor had simply made a pig of himself.)

The black spot marring Fillmore's Presidency was his signing of the odious Fugitive Slave Law as part of the ill-fated Compromise of 1850. He acted as he did because he reverenced "the union," as did so many men of goodwill (if poor judgment) on the eve of war. Ever after the abolitionists despised him for this wretched misstep: William Lloyd Garrison called him "as pliant a piece of dough as was ever handled."

Yet Fillmore was no craven pro-Southern doughface. In the 1830s, Congressman Fillmore had been an ally of John Quincy Adams in defending the right of abolitionists to petition the federal government. But he saw no good way to achieve emancipation without rending the country. In a draft of his farewell message, President Fillmore proposed freeing the slaves and then shipping them back to Africa or the West Indies; the alternative, he gloomily anticipated, was "a conflict of the races" ending in bloodbath. (His Cabinet convinced him to excise this proposal, lest it sow "discord.")

Fillmore's other great sin in the eyes of historians is his acceptance of the 1856 Presidential nomination of the American Party, popularly known as the anti-Catholic Know Nothings. In Fillmore's defense, he made nary an anti-Popish remark during his campaign. (Bishop Timon of Buffalo even regarded him as the candidate friendliest to the faith.) Fillmore was no bigot; it's just that the old boy missed the political whirl, and would hitch a ride thereto with any passing bandwagon. He won a respectable 22 percent of the nationwide popular vote in his fling as a Know Nothing.

Long before Jimmy Carter pounded a nail, Millard Fillmore was the best ex-President.

Fillmore wins the Peace President Prize for having opposed war at every opportunity. As a young ex-congressman, he denounced President James Polk's Mexican War as a "wild and wicked scheme of foreign conquest." As President, he resisted with great vigor the designs of the Democratic expansionists who wished the U.S. to acquire Cuba. And as an ex-President, he braved charges of "treason" and "insanity" to criticize what he termed the Lincoln administration's "military despotism."

In retirement, Fillmore became Buffalo's First Citizen, founding or assisting in the creation of the library, the historical society, the hospital, the fine arts academy, and numerous civic organizations. Long before Jimmy Carter pounded a nail, Millard Fillmore was the best ex-President.

He is still remembered every January 7, on his birthday, when Buffalonians gather at his graveside to eulogize his public-spiritedness. Not that his good works or pacific acts cut any ice with our chilly historians: In the Schlesinger polls of 1948, 1962, and 1996, Millard Fillmore ranked "below average" every time.

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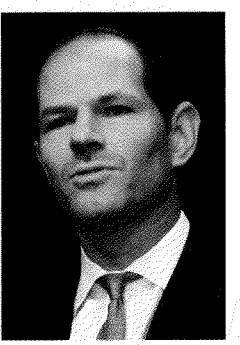
Eliot Spitzer

A Better Mutual Fund Reform

By James Glassman

The American mutual fund has been the most successful investment mechanism of all time. In 1970, there were 361 funds with a total of $48 billion in assets; at the end of 2003, there were 8,124 funds with $7.2 trillion in assets. That's as much as all the mortgage loans outstanding in America. It's the equivalent of $70,000 per household. It's two thirds of the Gross Domestic Product.

Invented exactly 80 years ago this spring, the mutual fund is a simple idea: a company that owns a portfolio of stocks, bonds, or cash managed by a professional. Individuals purchase shares of the company and thus own pieces of the portfolio—perhaps 100 or so different stocks, in a typical case.

Few investors could construct such a portfolio on their own, and nearly all investors lack the time and expertise to manage it—buying and selling stocks, handling the bookkeeping, filing the reports. For these services, the average fund charges investors about $125 a year for every $10,000 in assets they own. Some funds also charge investors a one-time commission, usually around 5 percent, which goes to the broker or adviser who sells the fund.

For more than ten years, I've written a financial column geared to small investors, and I consider mutual funds an awfully good deal. The public thinks so too. There are lots of other places they could put their money, yet 91 million Americans in 53 million households own funds (roughly half the nation).

Given this success, it's hard to believe that anyone would want to tamper with the industry, which has largely evolved on its own. But regulators on Capitol Hill, and their friends, can't sit still.

In early September of last year, the attorney general of New York, Eliot Spitzer, announced that several mutual funds had allowed large investors to profit from practices that were either illegal or actively discouraged by the fund's own published policies. The practices—called late trading and market timing—allowed privileged investors to benefit from all-but-certain price changes in stocks on foreign markets that close before the U.S. ones do. The harm to investors was negligible, but Spitzer was right to pursue them and unearth the scandal.

Now comes Stage Two—the part where the policymakers decide they need to add more and more rules. The Securities & Exchange Commission alone has proposed 17 of them, including requirements for absurdly detailed disclosures of fees and brokerage relationships, unnecessary changes in daily deadlines for buying and selling, new charges for redeeming shares, mandates for the composition of mutual fund boards, and on and on.

Like a similar rule-making stampede that last year produced the abomination called Sarbanes-Oxley (a new law that is costing investors billions of dollars in legal and accounting fees), the mutual-fund hysteria promises dubious benefits and high costs. More regulations, as the SEC and Congress are proposing, will only limit investors' choices and reduce their returns.

Additional rules will also confuse investors. Which leads to one productive thing government could do in the wake of the scandals: The Treasury, Labor Department, and SEC need to get serious about educating investors. Our school systems do a lousy job teaching economics and finance, and Americans are thrust into a baffling environment where they can make expensive mistakes.

The good news is that the industry is viciously competitive, and investors themselves can discipline miscreants. The worst of the offenders in the scandals have been badly damaged as shareholders bailed out. Putnam, for example, lost $29 billion in assets last year.

This is the kind of pressure that should be encouraged. Bruce Bent, inventor of the money-market fund in 1970, proposes that investors be allowed to move their money between funds without incurring capital gains taxes, which tend to lock investors into funds with ethical or financial deficiencies.

I like Bent's idea so much I think it should be extended. Any American should be able to move any investment from one vehicle to another—stocks, bonds, funds, perhaps even real estate—with a tax deferral until the money is actually taken out and used. Think of it as a universal, unlimited IRA.

If government wants to do something productive to improve the operation of mutual funds, this may be the best thing it could do.

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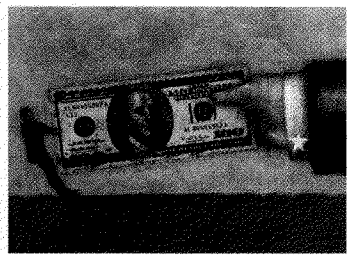

How Alternatives to the Welfare State Evolve

By Grover Norquist

On December 8, 2003, the White House and Tom DeLay twisted arms to pass an expansion of Medicare that is now estimated to cost $534 billion over the next decade. Then in his State of the Union Speech on January 20, President Bush called for reforming Social Security by giving younger Americans the option of investing part of their Social Security taxes in personal savings accounts. And on January 22, Congress finally passed a spending bill that included 1,700 tuition vouchers for low-income students in Washington D.C.

Here were three very different approaches to the three largest government entitlements: retirement income, health care, and education.

Conservatives were elated that the President called for putting America on the path toward Social Security investment accounts. That could turn the greatest experiment in statism in American history (Social Security eats up 20 percent of the federal budget) into an engine that dramatically expands the nation's investor class to include 100 percent of our citizens. Conservatives were distraught that the administration and Congress chose to dramatically expand Medicare spending, nationalizing a large portion of the provision of prescription drugs. And conservatives were delighted that amidst a large increase in government education spending, a small experiment in school choice for parents was enacted.

Let's look at the political life cycle of these three sharply diverging outcomes:

• **Social Security.** In 1978, Peter Ferrara wrote *Social Security: The Inherent Contradiction*, explaining that the pay-as-you-go Ponzi scheme was going broke and would provide a much worse return on investment than the stock market. This inaugurated a public education campaign that over a generation would convince younger Americans that Social Security was not likely to be there for them in any meaningful form. Also in 1978, Congress created Individual Retirement Accounts and expanded 401(k)s, sketching the outline of Social Security alternatives. As a result, the number of investors has increased from 20 percent in 1983 to 52 percent in 2001; the amount of assets with IRAs or 401(k)s, has quadrupled just since 1990, from $637 billion to $2.3 trillion. Nearly every American now either has a portable pension or knows someone who does.

• **Medicare.** While Social Security is set to run a deficit in 2018, Medicare is actually in much worse shape—its payments will outstrip its income by 2012. But few Americans know that, and few understand the central problem: Third-party payment of health care costs eliminates the incentives that keep costs down in other industries. Medical Savings Accounts solve the third-party problem, but to date only 750,000 Americans are legally allowed to have them.

Medicare reform is currently at about the stage Social Security reform was in 1978. A campaign to explain the real roots of the problem is only beginning, and we have barely launched the alternate structures that could eventually replace government provision of health care. One hopes it won't take 25 years this time for a President to propose the needed structural reforms.

• **Education.** Our schools lie somewhere between Social Security and Medicare in their ripeness for reform. Alternative structures exist (private schools, parochial schools, home schooling). Understanding that the government monopoly on education ill serves the young is common—but it's not universal.

Unfortunately, most elected officials in the urban areas where problems are worst are pawns of the teachers' unions and thus favor the status quo. In many suburbs, meanwhile, parents remain convinced their schools are "excellent," despite poor showings by any objective measure. The testing requirements in the "No Child Left Behind" federal spending boondoggle could explode this complacency, though. And the increasing number of school choice experiments in D.C., Colorado, Florida, Wisconsin, and soon Texas will expand structures that compete with the government monopoly.

These are the ways large, expensive, and popular, though troubled, programs get changed. It all starts with public dissatisfaction with the government program. Then come experiments with alternatives. And if the stars align, the final step is public acceptance of flexible, private structures that match the goals of welfare-state programs, without reproducing their inefficiencies, high costs, and inhuman rigidities.

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Beat the Press

The hand that rules the press…rules the country—Judge Learned Hand

Different Renegades, Different Media Portraits

By Chris Weinkopf

"Bush has conjured his favorite bogeymen—'activist judges' and renegade bureaucrats—to create a Constitutional crisis." That's how the *Los Angeles Times* editorialized when the President reacted to San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom's unilateral decision to start marrying homosexuals, launching a national same-sex marriage revolution. Enlightened people know there's no such bogeyman as an activist judge or renegade bureaucrat, right?

Except maybe down in Montgomery, Alabama, come to think of it. When Chief Justice Roy Moore of the Alabama Supreme Court tried to launch a little social movement of his own by installing a modest monument to the Ten Commandments in the courthouse rotunda, liberal reporters and editorialists didn't hesitate to portray him as a dangerous runaway judge, an underminer of the rule of law, a threat to the entire republic.

The *Washington Post* called Moore a "scofflaw…a man who feels free to ignore the Constitutionally designated system by which law is interpreted in a democratic society." The *Los Angeles Times* denounced Moore's "evangelical sideshow outside the Montgomery courthouse." The *New York Times* editorial page insisted that "Moore lacks the most basic requirement for judicial office: respect for the rule of law."

Yet when Judge Moore's kindred spirit in San Francisco, Mayor Gavin Newsom, decided to break the law rather than uphold it—by issuing bogus marriage licenses to same-sex couples—the media tones and personal characterizations were very different. No references in the *L.A. Times* to Newsom's "homosexual sideshow outside San Francisco City Hall." Rather, the descriptions were of a "provocative decision" that might "advance the rights of gays and lesbians."

The media painted Justice Moore as a dangerous scofflaw, while Mayor Newsom enjoyed the hero's treatment for his law flouting.

The *Washington Post* adopted a position of neutrality on Mayor Newsom quite different from its view of Justice Moore. And the Manhattanites at New York City's *Times* cheerily described Newsom's antics as "a welcome indication that the nation is having a long-overdue discussion about the right of gay people to marry."

Apparently the rule of law, so crucial in cultural backwaters like Montgomery, matters very little in enlightened places like San Francisco where left-wingers are in control. Though Moore and Newsom were both lawbreakers, Moore was painted as a dangerous extra-legal renegade, while Newsom has enjoyed the hero's treatment: an idealist, a civil-rights crusader, a paragon of civil disobedience, a compassionate public servant who isn't going to let bureaucratic niceties stand in the way of decency.

We've seen this tawdry double-standard play out in the media many times. When President Bush nominated a respected senator and former governor, John Ashcroft, to be U.S. attorney general, the *San Francisco Chronicle* frowned: "Can Ashcroft, an opponent of abortion… enforce laws that protect women's right to choose? Can Ashcroft, an opponent of affirmative action, enforce laws that give a helping hand to blacks?…Can he enforce gun-control laws he disagrees with?" The *Boston Globe* used the occasion to insist that public servants "enforce the law with dispassion." The *New York Times* warned that "the burden will be on Mr. Ashcroft to demonstrate that he can move beyond...his views to enforce the laws...impartially."

Yet none of these newspapers has registered a whisper of concern that Newsom refuses to enforce ordinances he "disagrees with." No complaints that he has given up on enforcing the law at all, let alone "with dispassion." No protests against the mayor for failing to "move beyond his personal views."

Of course, Newsom is young, affluent, liberal, thoroughly secular, and devoutly politically correct, just like most reporters and editorialists. Moore and Ashcroft, on the other hand, are Southerners, Christians, Republicans—the one breed the priests of tolerance have no intention of tolerating.

Nope, no bogeymen in our media.

Chris Weinkopf is editorial page editor of the Los Angeles Daily News.

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the Immigration Economist

Gambling with Visas

By Mark Krikorian

Uncle Sam is running a lottery—a visa lottery, that is.

Because of the overwhelming role family connections play in current immigration law, most U.S. newcomers stem from a handful of countries, primarily Latin American and Asian. In 1986, Congress used this lack of immigrant diversity as an excuse to institute an affirmative action program for white immigrants—a "diversity lottery." Devised by its sponsors (Irish-American congressmen) as a subterfuge to grant amnesty to Irish illegal aliens, the program continues even in the absence of Irish immigration.

In 2002, only 58 Irish ended up actually getting green cards via the lottery. Nonetheless, the lottery, like the mohair subsidy, has taken on a life of its own. It has evolved over time to offer a maximum of 50,000 visas per year to people from "underrepresented" countries, i.e., nations other than the top dozen sources of immigration. In practice, this means that most visa lottery winners come from the Islamic world and sub-Saharan Africa.

Unlike other components of the federal immigration program, the lottery has no constituency: no residents clamoring for the admission of relatives, no businesses seeking cheap foreign labor, no human rights crusaders demanding open borders. Still, when Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-VA), a former immigration lawyer, introduced a bill early last year to eliminate the visa lottery, it went nowhere. Supporters of mass immigration don't want to give an inch on any program, lest it upset the status quo.

There are, however, good reasons to shut down the diversity lottery. Here are a few:

• Despite the moniker, it has done nothing to diversify our immigrant flow. More than half of all our legal arrivals in 2002 came from just ten countries (almost exactly the same as a decade ago), and only one of these countries, Bosnia-Herzegovina, is European. In fact, the nation's total immigrant population (legal and illegal) has actually become *less* diverse during the course of the lottery. A recent analysis of census data by the Center for Immigration Studies found that from 1990 to 2000, Mexicans grew from 22 percent of all immigrants to 30 percent, while arrivals from all of Spanish-speaking Latin America increased from 37 to 46 percent. Truly diversifying immigration would require large reductions in immigration from Mexico and adjoining countries. The lottery simply cannot do what it purports to.

• If the lottery took the 50,000 most qualified people among the millions who apply, it might make sense. But the program's requirements are so low they do nothing to ensure that applicants have the skills needed in our modern economy, and final selections are based on luck rather than merit.

• Moreover, fraud is rampant in the program. The two most corrupt nations, according to Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index 2003, are Bangladesh and Nigeria—perennially among the top source countries for lottery winners. Since corrupt Third World countries are precisely the places that people most want to get out of, it makes sense that much of the demand for lottery visas comes from them. But this poses enormous problems.

State Department records show that lottery winners often file fraudulent visa information. The country with the largest number of lottery winners last year, Nigeria, had a diversity lottery visa refusal rate of a whopping 80 percent. Since the lottery invites visa applications from almost anyone (about 6 million people applied last year) and only requires credentials after selection, it often prompts a mad rush for bogus documents once the winners are notified.

• Fraud is bad enough when people lie about education or work experience. But in an age of terrorism, immigration loopholes can pose a dire security threat. Weeding out fraudulent lottery applications is a diversion for officials charged with identifying terrorists among the millions seeking to come to America.

This is particularly troubling because the lottery draws about one third of its applicants from Muslim-majority countries, where it provides a disproportionately important means of immigration. Some 20-25 percent of immigrants from Egypt, Bangladesh, and Sudan came that way in 2002, as did nearly half of Moroccan and Algerian immigrants.

Several lottery winners have already been involved in terrorism in the United States. Michigan sleeper cell member

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Mark Krikorian is executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies.

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Hero + Horse = Hidalgo!

A wealthy sheik, played by Omar Sharif, invites Frank Hopkins, played by Viggo Mortensen, to enter the greatest endurance horse race ever run.

By Josh Larsen

Paul Bunyan. Johnny Appleseed. Annie Oakley. John Henry. Davy Crockett. America has a rich tradition of folk heroes—one that Walt Disney Pictures, portrayer of many of this country's folk heroes on film, adds to with *Hidalgo*, a live-action adventure movie based on the legend of Frank T. Hopkins.

The worst part of the film is found at the very beginning, when a misleading placard claims the movie is "based on the life of Frank T. Hopkins." In truth, the facts of Hopkins's life are suspect at best. Though Hopkins claimed to be a sort of Forrest Gump of the Old West—surviving Wounded Knee and performing in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, both of which the movie briefly touches on—contemporary scholars have suggested it's all bunk.

Disney turns those myths, however dishonestly, into a rousing living legend. The movie focuses on a 3,000-mile horse race across the sands of the Arabian Desert. Hopkins, played by Viggo Mortensen of the *Lord of the Rings* films, enters the contest as the infidel challenger and rider of a mutt mustang (Hidalgo) in a land of purebred stallions. A portion of the Hopkins legend is that he was part Native American, making horse and master half-breed brothers of sorts, emblems of the American melting pot.

Like most folk tales, Hidalgo's narrative operates on the level of a children's story. If not for the harsh bursts of violence, this would be a wonderful kids movie, full of grand adventures and heroic deeds. The central contest is less a race than a survival test, with Hopkins facing down lethal thirst, brutal heat, swarming sandstorms, and other forces of nature. Then there are the conniving competitors—led by a British *femme fatale* (Louise Lombard) who is desperate to beat the rough-hewn upstart with her own horse.

Mortensen was one of the most valuable human anchors in the fantasy-laden *Rings* films, and here he is called on to personalize another mythic character. As a folk hero, Hopkins is less a specific individual than an amalgam of all we want an American to be. Mortensen has the common-man charm down pat—the word "pardner" rests naturally on his lips—along with a do-gooder's heart. The only racing rule Hopkins breaks in the desert is the one that forbids the competitors from helping each other, even if one of them is facing death.

Hopkins also has a Western sense of practicality that stands out among the opulent traditions he encounters in the Middle East. Omar Sharif appears as a revered sheik whose horse is favored to win the race, and when Hopkins first walks into the man's lavish tent—stocked with fine fabrics and dishes—his dirty jeans and dangling spurs look sorely out of place. Yet both men are there for a purpose, and soon the relationship between this sheik and cowboy moves from antagonism to curiosity, and eventually, to mutual respect.

Hopkins is pure cowboy—an American archetype. One of the movie's most thrilling moments comes when a boy looking from a watchtower calls out to the crowd below to tell them who is still in the race. After the expected horses appear over the horizon, the boy excitedly shouts, "Cowboy! Cowboy!" And Hopkins gets to be the underdog—something we Americans often think of ourselves as being, even though we rarely are.

Hidalgo has the ability to inspire, so long as you don't subject it to too rigorous of an intellectual test. There are times when the movie's idealism becomes cloying, as when Hopkins first arrives overseas and gazes in confusion at the legal slave trade taking place at the port—as if such practices were foreign to American soil. And as much as I admired Hidalgo the horse—especially his stubborn stance at the starting line one morning after Hopkins has decided to call it quits—the idea that a real cowboy would ultimately release his friend to the wild, as the epilogue suggests, rings false.

But if you're willing to forgive such lapses—along with Disney's curious decision to pass off noble folklore as truth—*Hidalgo* has the rambling appeal of a campfire yarn. Paul Bunyan, Annie Oakley, Davy Crockett? *Hidalgo* makes Frank Hopkins stand as tall as any of them.

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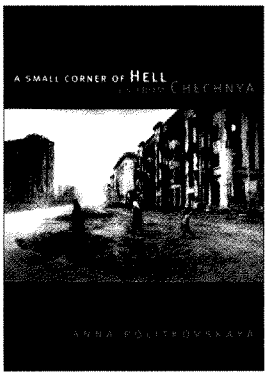
BookTalk

RUSSIA'S DIRTY WAR

By Peter Brownfeld

A Small Corner of Hell: Dispatches From Chechnya
By Anna Politkovskaya
University of Chicago Press, 208 pages, $25



Anna Politkovskaya, a correspondent for the Moscow biweekly *Novaya Gazeta*, has produced a stirring account of the horrors in Chechnya. Although she has been imprisoned, tortured, and threatened with rape and murder by Russian soldiers, she continues to report on the suffering of both Chechens and Russians.

Chechnya has intermittently been at war with Russia for centuries. Key moments of Chechnya's tragic history under Russian dominion include a decades-long rebellion in the mid-nineteenth century, armed resistance to the collectivization of 1929-1932, and Siberian exile for all 500,000 Chechens from 1944 to 1957 after Josef Stalin accused them of collaborating with the Germans.

The latest grim chapter in Chechen history began in October 1991, when the republic declared its independence. Russian president Boris Yeltsin, fearing a wave of secessions, was assured by his minister of defense, General Pavel Grachev, that he would crush the breakaway with "one paratroop regiment in two hours."

Despite temporary truces and the Kremlin's depiction of the war as finished, the killing has not stopped. Thousands of Russian soldiers have lost their lives, and as many as a quarter million Chechens have been killed—from a population of 1.1 million. In March 2003, Chechens stated their desire to remain a part of Russia—in a plebiscite that was not sanctioned by any international body and was widely reported to have been riddled with abuses. Meanwhile, the Chechen population continues to suffer intolerably at the hands of the Russian military, while Chechen rebels commit dastardly acts of suicide bombing and hostage-taking.

Politkovskaya's stories suggest that the 100,000 Russian soldiers in Chechnya are simply out of control, routinely kidnapping and torturing Chechens, often releasing them only when relatives or neighbors pay a ransom, even for corpses.

The Russians regularly conduct purges in Chechen towns. These raids are purportedly intended to track down militants and those who harbor them, but judging by Politkovskaya's descriptions, simple profit and sheer sadism are sometimes the motive. Describing a purge in Starye Atagi, she writes that the soldiers "entered the houses and demanded money for the men right away." Ransoms varied by the soldiers' visual appraisal of the home. Sometimes, she claims, ransoms are demanded to avoid rape.

Politkovskaya identifies three groups fighting in Chechnya: Political rebels who have been fighting from the beginning, with many now verging on simple banditry, sometimes in cooperation with Russian soldiers; the followers of radical Wahabi Islam, many of whom are not Chechen; and those fighting for revenge against previous injustices they or their family members suffered. She has no sympathy for the Wahabis, whom she sees as adding to the hardships of the Chechen people.

The number of those motivated by blood revenge is continuously growing, she says. "There is only one principle guiding the birth of these fighters: the more people get humiliated and hurt, the more units are formed." Some of these resisters are drawn from families who, before the fighting began, "were even hoping for the Russian troops to come and liberate them from the Wahabis."

Politkovskaya also reserves pity for those Russian soldiers in Chechnya who are honest and honorable. They suffer under the command of criminal superiors and indifferent political bosses, and receive beatings or worse for refusing to comply with the institutional brutality.

Because of Russian president Vladimir Putin's refusal to rein in Russia's soldiers, Politkovskaya is pessimistic about the future: "The only thing the methods of this war accomplish is to recruit new terrorists and resistance fighters, and to rouse hatred."

Peter Brownfeld is a political reporter in Washington, D.C.

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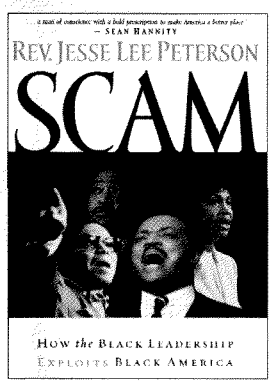
BLACK BLAME GAME

By Leslie Carbone

Scam: How the Black Leadership Exploits Black America
By Jesse Lee Peterson
WND Books, 224 pages, $22.99



Growing up a slave on a Virginia tobacco farm, Booker T. Washington "had the feeling that to get into a schoolhouse and study would be about the same as getting into paradise." His dream came true in 1872, when he entered the Hampton Agricultural Institute, working as a janitor to cover his expenses.

By 1881, Washington was principal of the Tuskegee Normal School for Colored Teachers, later known as the Tuskegee Institute, which offered academic education and practical instruction, in subject areas ranging from farming to printing.

In an 1895 speech, Washington offered his thoughts on the value of work: "Our greatest danger is that in the great leap from slavery to freedom we may overlook the fact that the masses of us are to live by the productions of our hands, and fail to keep in mind that we shall prosper in proportion as we learn to dignify and glorify common labor, and put brains and skill into the common occupations of life."

That same year, W. E. B. DuBois received a doctorate from Harvard. He also became an educator, teaching for decades at Atlanta University. There the similarities end. While Washington espoused personal success through hard work, DuBois advocated social change through agitation and protest. Washington called for all people to take responsibility for themselves; DuBois argued that "the Negro Race…is going to be saved by its exceptional men" who would "guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the worst."

While Washington advocated hard work in a free market, DuBois promoted socialist black cooperatives. He joined the Communist Party in 1961 and renounced his American citizenship. He lived out his days in Ghana, where his home featured busts of Marx, Lenin, and Mao.

Black America, says the Rev. Jesse Lee Peterson (who is black), has followed the advice of DuBois over that of Washington, to its great detriment. In *Scam: How the Black Leadership Exploits Black America*, Peterson writes that so-called black leaders are no more than "problem profiteers," effectively keeping others down by discouraging them from developing good character.

Peterson's view is informed by his work as head of the Brotherhood Organization of a New Destiny, an organization that seeks to build character in black men. Peterson has assigned himself a daunting task: "The typical black male I work with has no work ethic, has little sense of direction in his life, is hostile toward whites and women, has an attitude of entitlement, and has an amoral outlook on life," he writes. The entitlement mentality, Peterson says, stems from the belief that whites owe blacks for slavery and past discrimination. "They expect to be paid for doing little work, often show up late, and have bad attitudes while on the job," Peterson writes.

Fearful of civil rights lawsuits or complaints, many white employers "are nervous," Peterson reports. "A racist black who goes to work for a corporation poses a daily threat to the leaders of the business because all he needs to do is make a phone call to Jesse Jackson…. Jackson will march into town with his racist minions, and the negative publicity they generate will result in millions of dollars in losses to the corporation." This lets many blacks blame racism for their problems and find no reason to work on their own character. Peterson also argues that "many whites now lack character as a result of giving in to this fear for so long."

Scam is an important book, offering straightforward and firsthand experiences. The history Peterson provides of the Washington-DuBois debate is valuable, as few Americans seem well aware of it. Moreover, Peterson's recognition of the problem contains the seeds of hope.

Regrettably, *Scam* is marred by superficial analysis, as in his oft-repeated claim that God has ordained men to be leaders in the home and in the church. While this view is shared by many Christians (including this writer) and others, Peterson's repetition of it without exploration is frustrating and fruitless. Rather than explain why restoring this order is vital to cultural renewal, Peterson rather lamely writes, "It is simply the way life works best. It creates order and harmony, as opposed to the chaos we've seen in our inner cities…. I didn't invent this order…. Take your argument to God."

Such flimsy argumentation pervades the book, leaving the reader disappointed after having his intellectual appetite whetted by Peterson's common-sense insights. Still, the book, especially its early chapters, is worth reading, if only for the personal account of one who has taken on the admirable task of restoring character in a time and place hostile to it.

Leslie Carbone is author of Slaying Leviathan: The Moral Case for Tax Reform *(forthcoming).*

VERY PERSONAL JESUS

By Naomi Schaefer

American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon
By Stephen Prothero
Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 376 pages, $25

During his frantic scramble for a Presidential nomination, Howard Dean claimed to be a committed believer in Jesus Christ. At least in the sense, as he explained to the *Boston Globe*, that "Christ was someone who sought out people who

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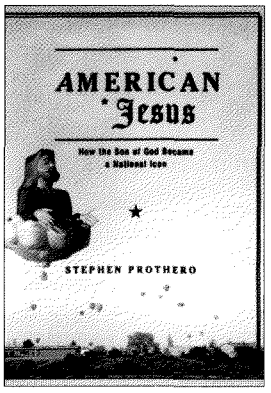

were disenfranchised… fought against [the] self-righteousness of people who had everything …[and] was a person who set an extraordinary example that has lasted 2,000 years."

Many who believe in Jesus as something else, namely the Messiah, will find offensive the idea of his career reduced to that of a nice guy who fought for the downtrodden. But Howard Dean, according to a new book by Boston University religion professor Stephen Prothero, is following a long tradition of reinterpreting both the person and the legacy of Jesus.

Dean's interpretation most resembles that of non-Christians. In a Christmas Day sermon in 1925, Reform Rabbi Stephen Wise described Jesus as a good Jew and a moral teacher. Other Jewish leaders in this tradition, like Kaufmann Kohler, saw Jesus as "one of the best and truest sons of the synagogue," "a helper of the poor," and "a sympathizing friend of the fallen."

Some religious groups have gone a step further. Many sects of Hindus see Jesus as a product of divine incarnation, though, as Prothero explains, they believe God has taken on a different human form on numerous occasions when He has needed to make Himself known.

Prothero also notes that plenty of Americans who consider themselves Christians have likewise imposed their own interpretations on the Savior. The first Christians in America, he emphasizes, were not all that concerned with Jesus. There was little room for the comforting face of Christ in Jonathan Edwards's picture of a "God that holds you over the pit of hell."

Prothero explains that "the Puritans were a God-fearing rather than a Jesus-loving people." With Thomas Jefferson's infamous slicing up of New Testament pages to include only the words and actions of Jesus, and none of his miracles or the words of the Apostles, the portrait became even more selective.

Arguments over the image of Jesus have been at the center of this quest to define him, and Prothero offers an engaging analysis of the shift in art from the Victorian Jesus of passive femininity to that of Billy Sunday's muscular Christianity. Whatever form He took, it was clear by the late nineteenth century that in order to be considered fully Christian in America, one had to place a central focus on Jesus. When the Mormons re-emphasized the importance of Jesus to their tradition in the 1890s, they were "Americanizing" and "Protestantizing" their theology, Prothero argues.

By the end of the last century, everyone wanted a piece of Jesus. Feminists claimed him as their own, some of them even cast him as a woman. *Yo Mama's Last Supper* (1996) shows the black artist Renee Cox as a naked female Jesus, and Judas as the only white person at the table. Decades before, Marcus Garvey, Jr., the leader of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, had promoted a black Jesus, convinced "that blacks would never truly respect themselves as long as they were worshipping a white Savior." Even today's Nation of Islam claims Jesus as one of its own, rather than rejecting Him.

Americans have tried to divorce Jesus from Christianity, from the supernatural, from the Church, from the Apostles, and from the New Testament. They have affixed him to causes from the abolitionist movement to anti-drug crusades to various business models. Perhaps it should come as no surprise that the man who seems to be all things to all people has become a role model even for Howard Dean.

Naomi Schaefer's book on religious colleges will be published this winter.

THE ECONOMIST *continued from 52*

Karim Koubriti, convicted this summer of terror-related charges, was a lottery winner from Morocco. So was Ahmed Hannan, who was convicted of document fraud in the same trial. The most notorious lottery winner is Hesham Mohamed Ali Hedayet, the Egyptian immigrant who went to Los Angeles International Airport to kill Jews on July 4, 2002. Hedayet came to this country on a temporary visa, became illegal when he overstayed his welcome, then applied for asylum, was denied, again becoming an illegal alien, and finally got a green card when his wife won the lottery.

• The visa lottery sets new chains of legal and illegal immigration into motion. No one wakes up in Mecca and says, "Today, I will move to Hoboken!" Immigration takes place by way of networks of relatives or friends already in the United States. The lottery creates networks where none existed.

Even 9/11 didn't make much of a dent. About 2.5 million applicants from Muslim-majority countries applied in the lottery that started just three weeks after the attacks. Troll the Internet and you can see the lottery's power to spark interest in coming to America. Using the search terms, "green card lottery," Google returns 128,000 hits, including sites like dreamofusa.com, visaforyou.org, mygreencard.com, and hundreds of others. The lottery frenzy is so intense that crooked "consultants" have grown fat off of unsuspecting dreamers.

There is a Chinese saying about gambling that suggests it's always advisable to "leave the window open to chance." There is always a chance that some visa lottery winner will be a future inventor, entrepreneur, or other notable addition to America. Unfortunately, "chance" can go both ways, and in the case of this lottery, it already has. The sooner we stop rolling these dice, the better.

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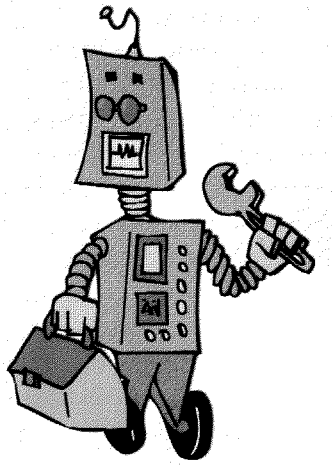
Edited by Eli Lehrer

the Digest

Summaries of important new research from the nation's universities, think tanks, and investigative publications



POLITICS

National Service Plan

John Kerry, "A Plan to Enlist 1 Million Americans in National Service a Year," February 2004 (johnkerry.com)

A national service initiative ranked high among Bill Clinton's priorities, and, to the surprise of many conservatives, George W. Bush called for expanding Clinton's AmeriCorps program. Presumptive Democratic nominee John Kerry has even loftier ambitions for national service: a plan to enlist 1 million Americans in community service programs each year. In addition to expanding existing programs like the Peace Corps and AmeriCorps, Kerry's national service plan focuses on four groups: teenagers, enlisted military personnel, senior citizens, and civil defense volunteers.

For teens, Kerry favors a wide range of summer community service activities. In exchange for helping out in nursing homes, teaching senior citizens computer skills, and cleaning up national parks, youths would receive $500 grants for college or vocational school tuition. Kerry also wants to mandate community service for high school graduation everywhere in the country and leave states free to design different programs. He also promises that the federal government would fund these state-designed programs.

Military service would also become more attractive to some under Kerry's plans. He wants to make it easier for enlisted men and women to afford college by guaranteeing four-year in-state tuition to anyone who serves in the military for two years. Kerry would also cut federal funding to non-religious colleges that refuse to allow ROTC on campus. Kerry argues that this plan would allow the military to increase its active-duty component and rely far less on reserves.

Senior citizens would also play a role in Kerry's national service plan. Under a "Retired—Not Tired" program, senior citizens could earn up to $2,000 per year, tax-free. (The existing Senior Corps program, which also tries to get senior citizens to volunteer, is far less generous.) The money could go to pay for the volunteer's own health care or someone else's education.

Finally, Kerry proposes an ambitious "Community Defense Service" that would build on the existing Citizen Corps program. Under this program, "Volunteer Service Captains" would receive training in helping to identify local health professionals and experts in the area, provide information on local evacuation or quarantine plans, and stand ready to assist local public safety forces when necessary. The Department of Homeland Security would run the program and localities would administer it themselves.

—Kari Leveton

ECONOMICS AND REGULATION

Deficit Debate

Alice Rivlin and Isabel Sawhill, "Growing Deficits and Why They Matter," in *Restoring Fiscal Sanity: How to Balance the Budget,* Brookings Institution, January 2004 (brookings.org)

For most of the twentieth century, America has run budget deficits. Except for some brief periods during the economic booms of the 1920s, '50s, '60s, and '90s, the American government spent more money than it took in. Under Bill Clinton, a combination of tax increases, modest spending growth, and robust economic growth resulted in the most recent run of surpluses. Under George W. Bush, slower economic growth, coupled with tax cuts and increased spending on defense, homeland security, and education, has resulted in deficits that are the largest in history in dollar terms, but quite modest in comparison to the size of the economy.

Alice Rivlin, who held a variety of important positions in the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the Clinton administration, and the Federal Reserve, and

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Isabel Sawhill, a think-tank economist, believe that the current deficits result from "trying to have it all: lower taxes *and* increased spending—for Social Security, Medicare, defense, homeland security, and many other programs."

Rivlin and Sawhill take a critical look at the official ten-year deficit projections from the CBO. These projections, they show, make a variety of rather dubious assumptions (like the expiration of tax provisions that Congress is almost certain to extend). Rather than dipping into deficit for a few years and then returning to a run of surpluses, they believe that the budget will remain in the red indefinitely unless Congress raises taxes, cuts spending, or engages in some combination of the two. Beyond the ten-year window the CBO examines, the deficits will grow larger due to increasing Social Security and Medicare costs.

Rivlin and Sawhill argue that deficits can hurt the economy in a variety of ways:

• Higher interest rates: With government borrowing more money, businesses will pay higher interest rates for capital borrowing, and consumers will pay higher interest rates on home mortgages and other obligations. The result will be slower economic growth (thanks to a lack of investment), and less disposable income for consumers.

• Increased revenue flowing overseas: The total share of debt purchased by foreigners is increasing. As a result, much of the interest on the debt flows to places outside of the United States and thus does not directly benefit Americans.

• Debt service: The interest on deficits needs to be paid off over a period of years. As a result, an increasing percentage of future tax revenue will go to simply pay interest rather than provide programs or reduce taxes.

"What is needed to enhance long-term growth is higher national saving," write Sawhill and Rivlin, "not the lower saving generated by bigger deficits."

CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Wealth Hurts Health?

Nicholas Eberstadt and Sally Satel, *Health and the Income Inequality Hypothesis: A Doctrine in Search of Data,* AEI Press, January 2004 (aei.org)

In recent years, a variety of left-leaning academics have advanced an "inequality hypothesis" suggesting that income inequality reduces the overall level of health in a society. Two AEI scholars, demographer Nicholas Eberstadt and medical doctor Sally Satel, examine the evidence for this hypothesis and find it greatly lacking. Conclusions drawn out of aggregate data swiftly vanish once one looks at the underlying data.

To illustrate the problem, Eberstadt and Satel hypothesize a country with perfectly equal income distribution and a society-wide life expectancy of 75 years. If one enormously wealthy person moved to the country, both average income and income inequality would increase sharply while life expectancy (and actual standards of living) would remain essentially unchanged. Compared to other countries with the same average income, however, the country would look much worse.

Real-life tests of the hypothesis also come up short in most cases. Examining data concerning the supposedly detrimental effects of income inequality, such as less social cohesion and greater stress, the two researchers find that the statistics upon which income inequality proponents rely are contradictory. They also find that the negative effects of income inequality disappear altogether when one looks at individuals born in a particular year or group of years rather than the population as a whole.

Satel and Eberstadt conclude that assigning poor health outcomes to income inequality is popular largely because radical economic restructurings have romantic appeal to many academics. The hypothesis, they suggest, "is best understood as a creed or faith, rather than an intellectual conjecture."

NATIONAL SECURITY

Who Are the Ideologues?

David Frum and Richard Perle, "Beware the Soft-Line Ideologues," *AEI on the Issues*, January 2004 (aei.org)

America's foreign policy debates are dominated by tension between hard-liners and soft-liners. Soft-line thinkers, such as Secretary of State Colin Powell and former National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, support working through international organizations like the United Nations. Hard-liners, such as Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, support unilateral action when necessary and are very willing to use military force against terrorists.

Richard Perle and David Frum, both AEI fellows, say that hard-liners have won nearly all of the major policy battles, but soft-liners have had near-total control over the way those battles are portrayed in the media. Reporters call soft-liners "pragmatists," while hard-liners are branded as "ideologues." In fact, Perle and Frum argue, the real ideologues are the soft-liners who refuse to let facts get in the way of elegant theories. Among the several countries and regions they use to support this claim, two stand out.

In the case of Iran, say Frum and Perle, "Soft-liners tend to think that so long as we are talking…we are accomplishing something—even if everything they say to us is an obvious lie." Iran has continually claimed to be willing to stop weapons programs and reform, but it has made no tangible movement so far. Soft-liners, like Powell, nevertheless continue to talk about supposedly hopeful signs of progress despite no evidence that such signs mean anything.

When it comes to Israel, soft-liners insist on believing that the Palestinian

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Authority is willing to acknowledge Israel's right to exist and follow the "road map" to peace. So far, however, Palestinian leaders have failed to take a single step called for by the road map, have refused to repudiate their desire to destroy Israel, and have continued a campaign of terror against the Jewish state.

In the end, Frum and Perle conclude, the soft-liners are really the ones who believe in an unrealistic ideology. A better way to describe today's Washington foreign policy debates, they state, is as between hard-line "pragmatists" and soft-line "ideologues."

SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT

Robot Science

Ross King et al., "Functional Genomic Hypothesis Generation and Experimentation by a Robot Scientist," *Nature*, January 2004 (nature.org)

Robots and smart appliances already help scientists, engineers, and ordinary consumers do everything from make toast to assemble automobiles. Now they may actually do science. A team of researchers led by Ross King, a computer scientist at the University of Wales, has succeeded in building a computer-controlled system that appears capable of designing experiments and following a process of scientific reasoning without any direct human input. The system consists of computerized modules that do the robot's "thinking" and a liquid handling platform that conducts experiments. The computer system contains knowledge about biology, experimental procedure, and the yeast organism in general, but nothing about the specific outcomes it is supposed to achieve. The robot follows the same process employed by scientists: Use logical inferences to form a hypothesis, run experiments that attempt to disprove it, and formulate new hypotheses if the experiments falsify the existing hypothesis.

The robot performed large-scale experiments on the functions of genes on yeast organisms. (The organizers selected yeasts because their functions are already reasonably well understood.) In its mission to rediscover gene functions already known by human scientists, the robotic system followed three different experimental strategies: randomly selecting experiments, doing the least costly experiment that had not already been done, and a "smart" strategy that attempted to mimic human reasoning. The robot's "smart" strategy then competed against teams of graduate students in biology to do the same experiments. The "smart" strategy significantly outperformed the random selection strategy, the "least costly" experiment strategy, and most human experimenters. The best human experimenters and the robot performed at roughly the same level.

These robotics researchers appear to prove that a substantial part of the grunt work of scientific discovery can be programmed into a computer. That has important implications for the increasingly sophisticated, lengthy, and costly process of developing new drugs. "Increased automation of science," the researchers believe, is "both inevitable and desirable; inevitable because it will be required to deal with the challenges of science in the twenty-first century [and] desirable because it frees scientists to make the high-level creative leaps at which they excel."

OTHER COUNTRIES

Arabian Democracy Is Possible

Joshua Muravchik, "Bringing Democracy to the Arab World," *Current History*, January 2004 (currenthistory.com)

While a large and growing percentage of nations on every continent has freely elected governments, not a single one of the 21 Arab countries gives its citizens a significant say in the affairs of state. The lack of democracy in the Arab world has become a particular concern since 9/11 because as a rule, democratic states, unlike dictatorships, do not breed international terrorists.

Joshua Muravchik divides the world into two camps. One, represented by the likes of U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, believes that poverty causes terrorism. The other, which President George W. Bush represents, believes that tyranny itself results in terrorism. Bush, consequently, has attempted to "drain the fever swamps" of Middle Eastern tyranny and sow the seeds of democracy all around the region. Muravchik places himself clearly in the second camp. While Muravchik says "the claim that something in Arab culture makes it resistant to democracy cannot be refuted until the first Arab democracy comes into being," he also finds that "there is reason to be skeptical of the skepticism" that Arabs cannot run a democracy.

Muravchik notes that Arabs are not the first group judged incapable of self-rule. At various times eminent thinkers have declared Roman Catholics, Asians in general, Japanese, and blacks incapable of self-government. History has proven them wrong. He also points out that democracy has existed in the Arab world before. Between World War II and the 1970s, Lebanon had an essentially democratic government. Muravchik notes that poverty needn't veto democracy. Sub-Saharan Africa, significantly poorer than the Arab world by nearly every measure, surpasses the Arab world in democracy.

Muravchik proposes that a combination of foreign aid, diplomacy, and international broadcasting can speed real democratic change in the Middle East. Military force will not be necessary. "Democracy, or at least its rudiments, has suddenly become the norm," he concludes, "a norm that one day will extend to the Arab world."

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Opinion Pulse

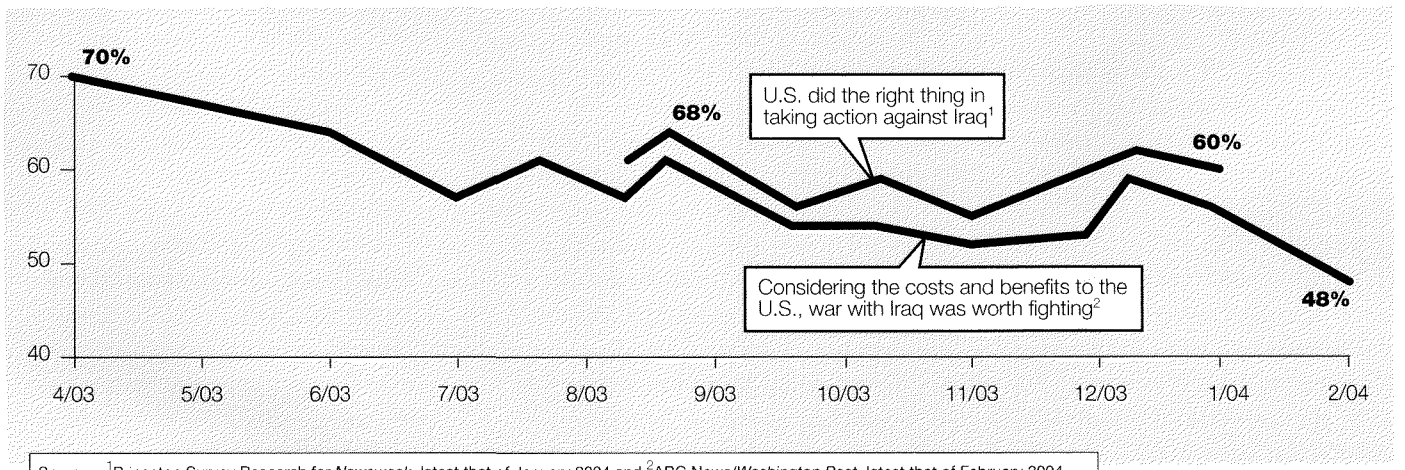
Edited by Karlyn Bowman

Iraq: U.S. Public Opinion Holds

Most polls about the Iraq war show a decline in optimism from the immediate postwar period. This is a familiar reaction. Still, a solid majority in one poll (60 percent) continues to say that the United States did the right thing in taking action there. In another poll, however, less than a majority (48 percent) now believe that the war was worth fighting, considering the costs and benefits. Most Americans continue to say that the U.S. military effort is going well in Iraq.

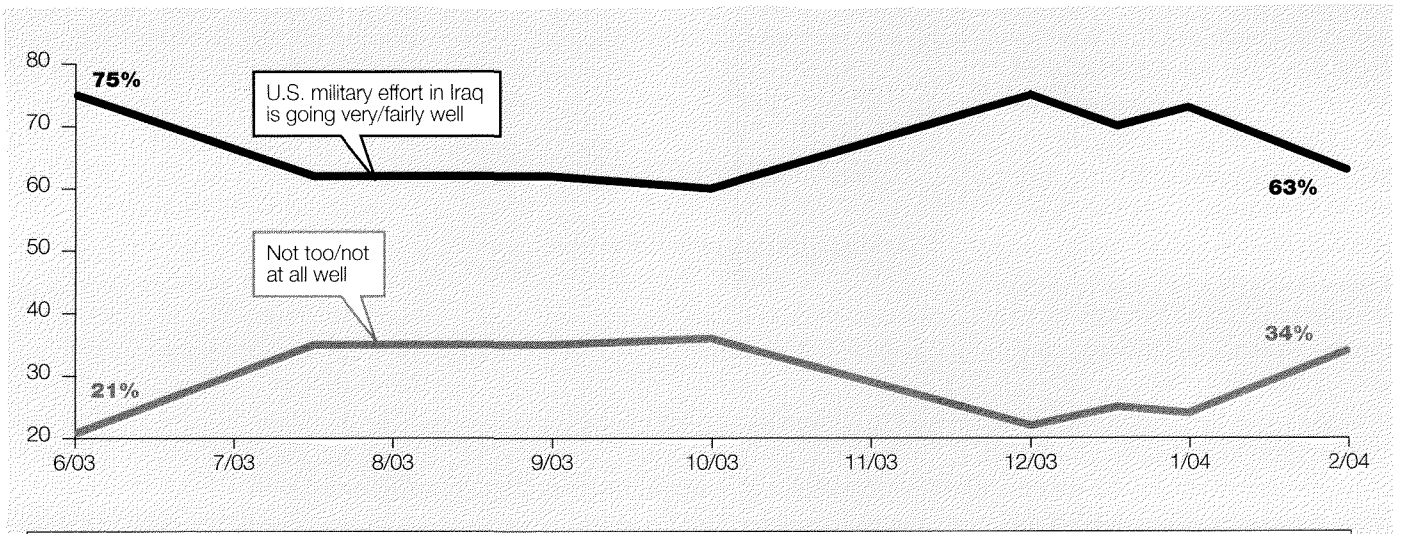
Question: From what you know now, do you think...?[1]

Question: All in all, considering the costs to the United States versus the benefits to the United States, do you think...?[2]



Sources: [1]Princeton Survey Research for *Newsweek*, latest that of January 2004 and [2]ABC News/*Washington Post*, latest that of February 2004.

Question: How well is the...?



Note: In most of these polls, around 20 percent have said the effort is going very well. At the other end of the spectrum, 11 percent or fewer have said the effort is going not well at all.
Source: Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, latest that of December 2003–January 2004.

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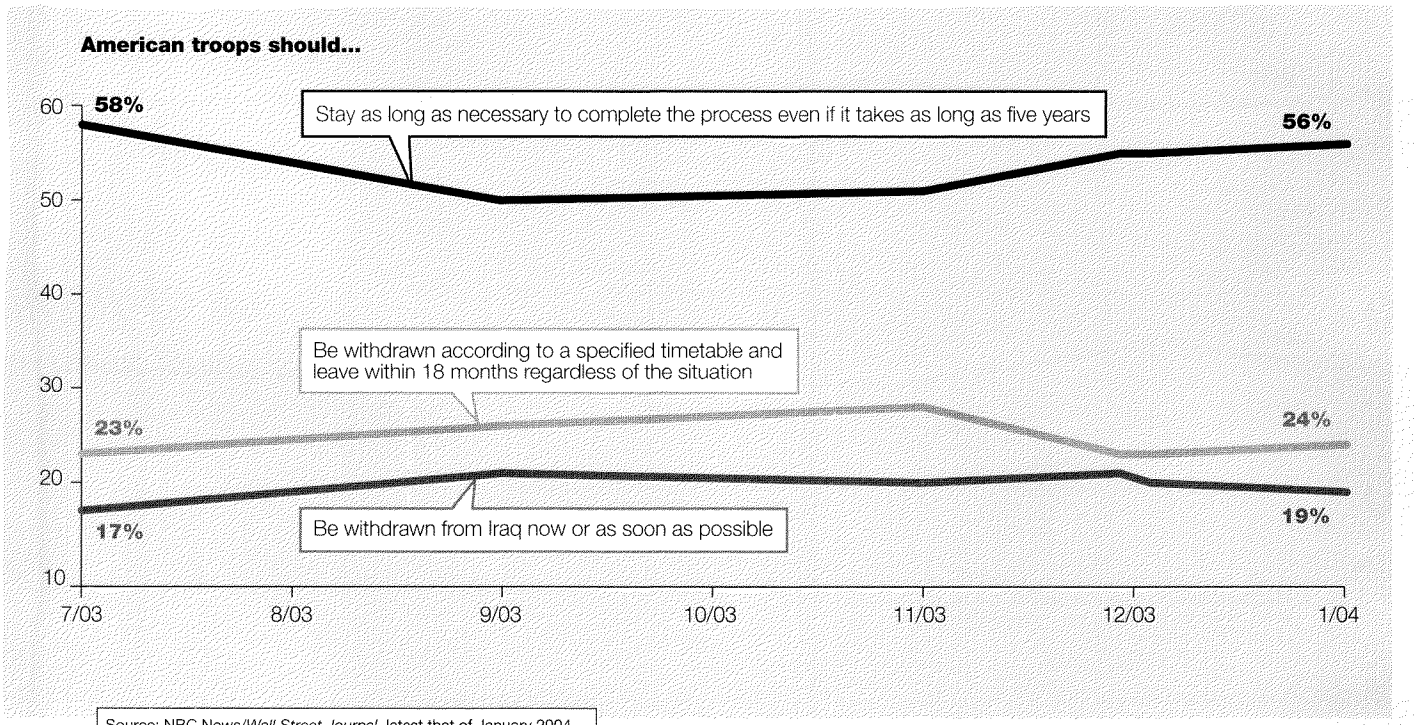
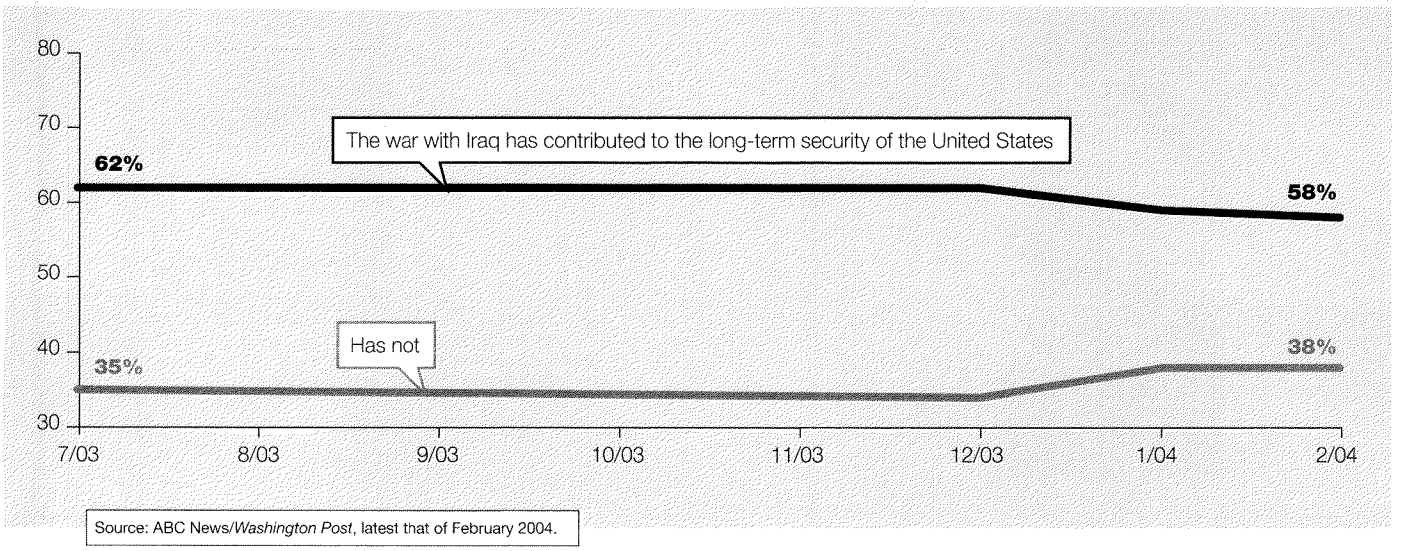
On six occasions since July 2003, NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* pollsters have asked Americans how long our troops should stay in Iraq. On each occasion, a majority has chosen the response "as long as necessary to complete the process, even if it takes as long as five years." Around 20 percent want to withdraw our troops now or as soon as possible. A solid majority believe that the war has contributed to the long-term security of the United States.

Question: Which comes closer to your view...?



Source: NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*, latest that of January 2004.

Question: Do you think...?



Source: ABC News/*Washington Post*, latest that of February 2004.

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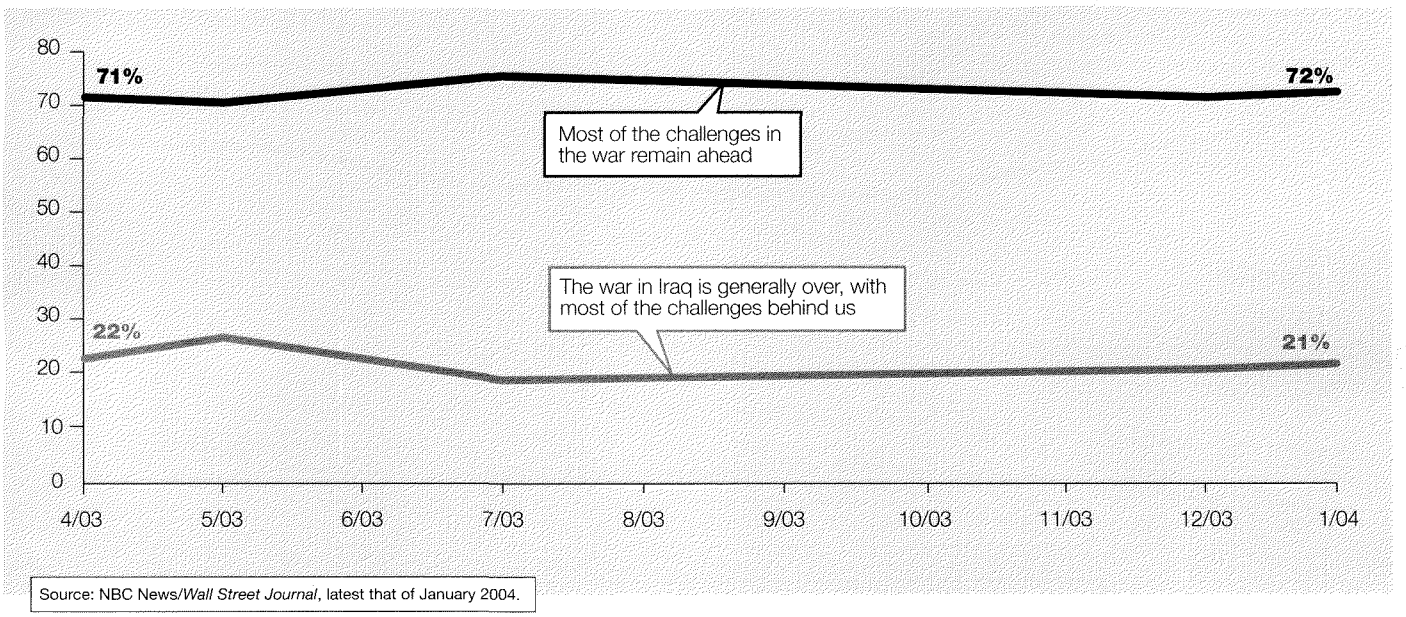
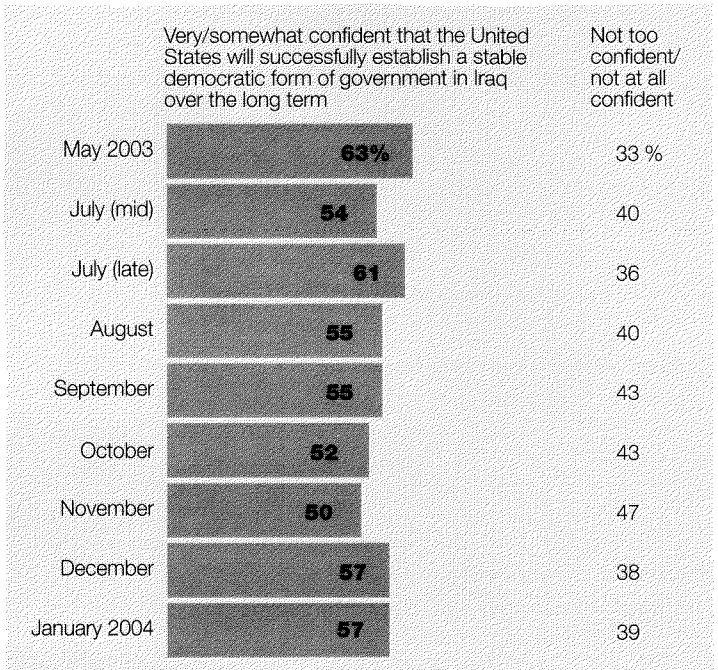
Americans were under no illusions that the fall of Baghdad meant an easy road ahead. Since April 2003, large majorities have told pollsters that most of the challenges in Iraq are still to come. Most remain confident that we can establish a stable democratic government in Iraq in the long term. Before Saddam Hussein's capture, majorities did not think the Bush administration had a clear plan for postwar Iraq. After his December 13 capture, opinion was divided.

Question: Do you think...?



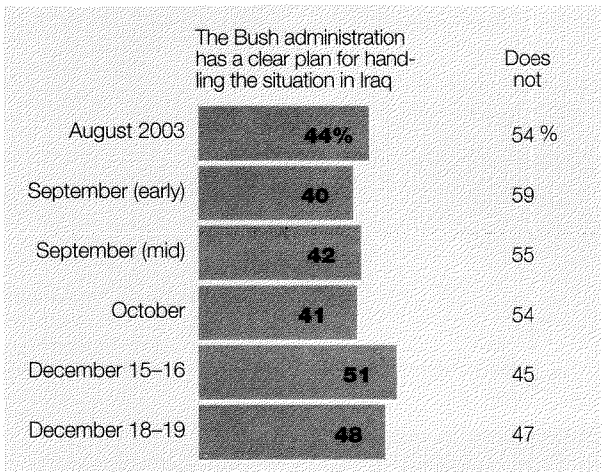
Source: NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*, latest that of January 2004.

Question: How confident are you that...?



Source: Princeton Survey Research Associates for *Newsweek*, latest that of January 2004.

Question: Do you think...?



Source: Gallup, CNN, and *USA Today*, August, early September, and mid December, ABC News and the *Washington Post*, mid September, October, and mid December.

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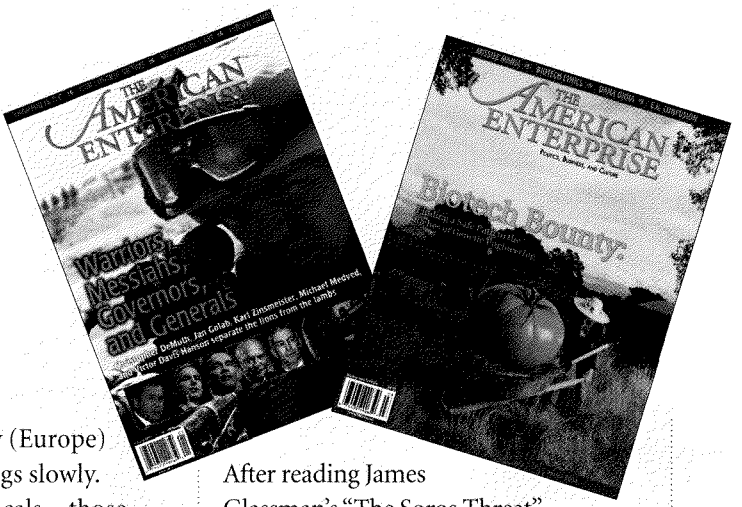

The Massachusetts Supreme Court's view of equality is hopelessly flawed. Gays and lesbians already enjoy equal marriage rights: All have the right to marry one member of the opposite sex. The complaint of gays and lesbians, of course, is that they have no use for this right.

A lack of interest in their existing right, however, does not entitle them to a new, compensating right to same-sex marriage.

No supreme court, in Massachusetts or otherwise, has the authority to create a new right to same-sex marriage. The legitimate way to create any new right is through a Constitutional amendment. The onus should have been on gay rights activists to pass an amendment to legalize gay marriage.

That process would have resulted in a decision that considered all the people's views, not just those of a handful of politically correct justices. The judges' end run around the Massachusetts constitution represents the highest of crimes, and it is time to impeach them.

Mark Psiaki
Ithaca, New York

I am ready to be convinced by Patrick Moore that genetically modified crops can be used safely, but "The Green Case for Biotech" (March), fell far short of being conclusive.

The arguments against G.M. crops are partly about caution. So many scientific "advances" turned out to be harmful after they had been widely introduced. I am glad that for once a major industrial society (Europe) has decided to take things slowly. It at least forces the radicals—those who wish to introduce the genetic changes—to spend more time proving their case.

Dave Belden
Accord, New York

Eli Lehrer shows a surprising lack of knowledge about geography in "Diary of Discovery" (BOOKTALK, March). He writes, "After St. Louis, the push-off point, Missoula, Montana is the largest town on [Lewis and Clark's] route." My 1995 edition of the Rand McNally Road Atlas lists at least ten cities along the Lewis and Clark route that come before Missoula and have larger populations.

Vern Elefson
River Falls, Wisconsin

Eli Lehrer responds:
Mr. Elefson is quite right that my phrasing was misleading. The sentence should have indicated that, of the territory on their route previously unexplored by Europeans, Missoula is the largest town.

Regarding Daniel Benjamin's "The Eight Myths of Recycling" (ENTERPRISING, January/February): Time can change the meaning of words. Witness the word "recycle." Definition 1970: the salvage of certain seemingly worthless material for profit. Definition 2003: re-using valueless junk to make everyone feel good.

Michael Crane
Orford, New Hampshire

After reading James Glassman's "The Soros Threat" (FORWARD OBSERVER, January/February), I was tempted just to shrug and move on. But it occurred to me that the man he writes about must really worry that most people view his success as nothing more than a lucky lottery win. Mr. Soros seems not to respect himself, and thus is searching frantically for a way to prove he is more than a money manipulator doing strange things to a country's currency. Not getting what he needs from his fellow businessmen, he has gone in search of praise where money commands quick, even fulsome response.

If there is one constant in this world, it's the lavish praise that can be gained by doling out money.

John Rogers
Hartford, Alabama

As a Roman Catholic, I am grateful to both Michael Medved and Rabbi Daniel Lapin for defending Mel Gibson against scurrilous allegations that his film, *The Passion of the Christ*, is anti-Semitic and will spark violence against Jews ("Crucifying Mel Gibson," January/February).

Gibson's critics, especially Abraham Foxman, the national director of the Anti-Defamation League, have engaged in religious McCarthyism by lumping together traditionalist Catholics like Gibson with anti-Semites who believe that all Jews are responsible for the death of Jesus Christ.

Dimitri Cavalli
Bronx, New York

The American Enterprise welcomes your comments. Send e-mail to TAE@aei.org. Or write "The Mail," The American Enterprise, 1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Or fax (202) 862–5867. Please include your address and phone number. Published letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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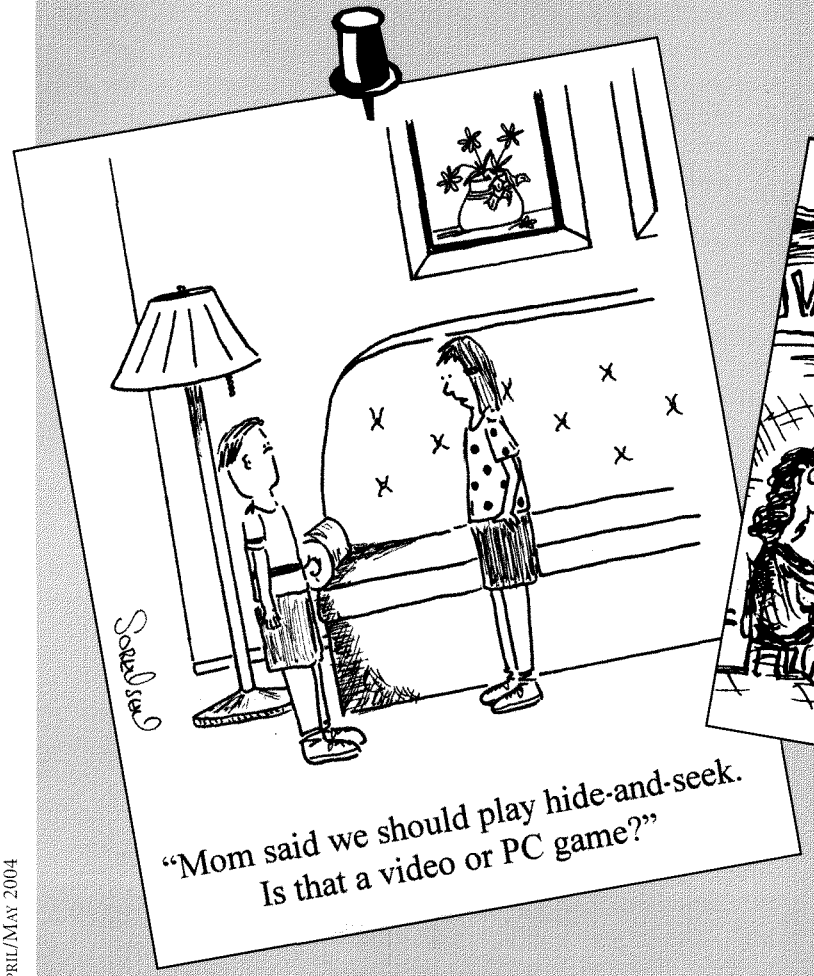

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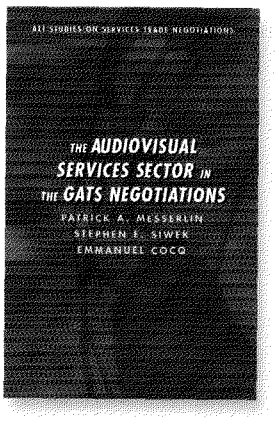

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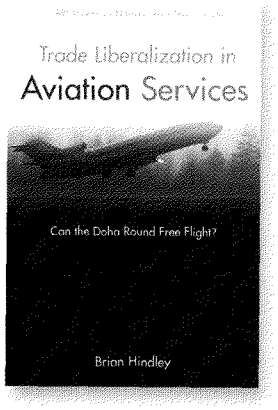

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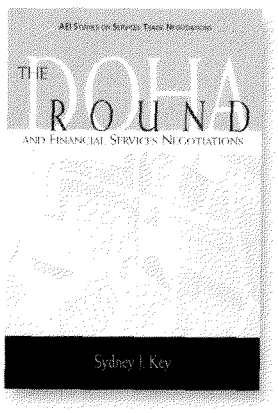

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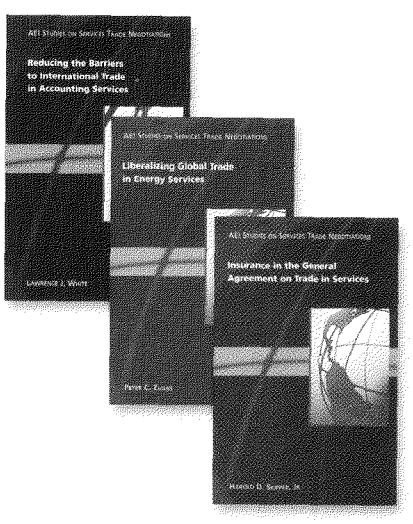

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